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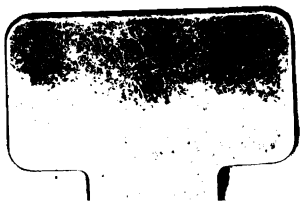


THE CHURCH AND HER ACCUSER IN THE FAR NORTH;

OR,

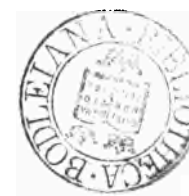
SIR G. SINCLAIR OF ULBSTER CALLED TO ACCOUNT,

FOR HIS

"SIX LETTERS ON THE POSITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHERN COUNTIES."

BY

INVESTIGATOR



Harpsdale's blast
Come at last.——PAGE 14.

GLASGOW:
JOHN SMITH & SON.
WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH

MDCCCL.

PRINTED AT THE GLASGOW CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE.

PREFACE.

THE following letters originally appeared in the *Glasgow Constitutional*. They are reprinted, in their present form, in the hope of its introducing them to persons who are not readers of that newspaper. The enemies of the Church have been most assiduous in circulating Sir G. Sinclair's "lucubrations," and have even gone so far as to send forth, from a publishing-office at Perth, a small and very portable pamphlet, in which the grossest of his mis-statements and calumnies are repeated with unqualified approbation. It is with the view of counteracting the mischief which the Baronet and his Church-reviling coadjutors are anxious to accomplish that these letters are made more accessible to the public than they have hitherto been. The Author is by no means averse to a controversy as to the extraordinary disclosures which he has felt it his duty to make. He is not only prepared to maintain the truth of all that he has written, but is in possession of a large quantity of additional matter, which he is far from being indisposed to employ, in confutation of Sir George and of those who disseminate his slander. He invites discussion, and will be glad to receive, through the Editor of the *Constitutional*, any hostile effusions to which his publication may give rise.

It is proper to explain that the references which will be found in the subsequent pages are to the first edit

of Sir George's pamphlet. It was but yesterday that the Author became aware of a "second" and "enlarged" edition having been issued. The additions are the reverse of improvements, for they are equally discreditable to our Baronet's head and heart. What was *sen*ility in the first edition is *an*ility in the second. There is a long note about William the Fourth, which indicates the last stage of drivelling dotage.* And the moral deformity of the postscript is sensibly increased, though its original aspect seemed as bad as possible. It would interfere with the arrangements of the printer if the second edition were to be fully discussed, but some of its absurdities and falsehoods may be noticed in a few foot-notes.

7th MAY, 1850.

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* "Infirmity that decays the wise doth ever make the better fool."—*Twelfth Night.*

No. I.

To the Editor of the Glasgow Constitutional.

SIR,—Now that the Easter recess has relieved your columns of the Parliamentary debates, perhaps you will allow me to animadvert upon the pamphlet which Sir G. Sinclair of Ulbster lately issued from the press, with the title—"Six Letters on the Position and Prospects of the Established Church of Scotland, especially in the Northern Counties." The hon. Baronet addresses himself to Dr. Robertson, the distinguished Convener of the Committee appointed by last General Assembly for promoting the endowment of additional churches in destitute localities; and, while he professes himself an adherent, and even an office-bearer, of our National Church, endeavours, to the utmost of his small ability, to depreciate her usefulness, and to malign her ministers. The Committee seem resolved to treat his attacks upon their great Christian enterprise with dignified silence, and to leave the bane of what he has written to be counteracted by the antidote of his name. They appear to be of opinion that, by avowing the authorship of his letters, he has rendered it unnecessary that they should be formally refuted. I have no doubt that their most significant disregard of Sir George and his "lucubrations" (*see* Pamphlet, *passim*) is cordially approved of by a large proportion of their constituents. But I happen to know that the accidents of bookselling have brought the assertions of the Baronet under the eye of persons who have given an amount of credit to his testimony to which it is not entitled. I have read in the Free Church Magazine, and in other anti-Church periodicals, earnest appeals to their friends "to exert themselves in introducing these letters where they are likely to be useful, and procuring

for them the circulation which they deserve."—(Free Church Magazine, No. 74, page 53.) Cases have been reported to me in which rather weak, but really well-meaning adherents of our Church have been subjected to great uneasiness, by persons more remarkable for cunning than candour, who have endeavoured to persuade them that the religious communion to which they are conscientiously attached, and from which they feel that they cannot separate without incurring the guilt of schism, must be in a very objectionable "position," when it is so harshly assailed by a man who assumes as his motto, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" It is my knowledge of these circumstances which has led me to examine Sir George's statements; to enquire for myself into the ecclesiastical, moral, and social condition of the people of the northern counties, which he has selected as affording the most striking illustrations of the inefficiency of our Church, and of the impropriety, or, as he would say, absurdity, of looking to her as an instrument in the hand of God for promoting the national welfare; as well as to pay some slight attention to the past history of this renowned *censor morum*, whose example I must not follow by interlarding my letter with scriptural quotations, introduced in a way which would be ludicrous, if it were not profane, but to whom I would simply say, "They that live in glass-houses should not throw stones at their neighbours." I trust that this "secluded country gentleman," as he designates himself (page 1), will not be deprived of the satisfaction which he must derive from reading what I write, and that you will be very careful to attend to the gentle hint contained in the modest and humble note with which his preface concludes,—"Any newspapers, in which these lucubrations may be noticed, would be thankfully received."

It is barely possible that some of your readers may be in such deplorable ignorance as to be unaware of the general tenor of that "public life" to which Sir George so

frequently refers as the antecedent of the "lucubrations," and I therefore deem it proper to describe it in as few words as I can. Suffice it to say, that before the Baronet withdrew to his "silent and sorrowful seclusion," (page 7), "inconsistency," with which, as he confesses, (page 35,) he has "been often taxed in reference to Church matters," was the grand characteristic of his whole career. His windings and counterwindings were so unceasing, that the newspapers recognised him sometimes as a Whig, and at other times as a Tory; to-day as a virulent opponent of Church Patronage, and to-morrow as the uncompromising adherent of its most determined supporters. While he was in the House of Commons, he divided his allegiance between Mr. Daniel O'Connell and Sir Robert Harry Inglis, Mr. Joseph Hume and Mr. John Wilson Croker, and was equally zealous for Conservative principles and for Triennial Parliaments and Vote by Ballot. What those two staunchest of Presbyterians, Dr. Andrew Thomson and Dr. M'Crie, were to him when he visited Edinburgh, that, Bishop Phillpotts and Mr. Dodsworth, of Tractarian celebrity, were to him as soon as he entered London. He acted as Chairman of the Committee which delighted to honour, in the hour of public obloquy, the well-known anatomical lecturer who was supplied with subjects by Burke and Hare, and he uniformly cultivated the friendship of the gentle and amiable Wilberforce. Such was "the public life" of this modern Proteus, in whose "lucubrations" the adversaries of our Church find so much to admire.

I don't intend to discuss with him the new poor law, on which he lavishes so extraordinary an amount of reprobation that I am tempted to suspect there must be some truth in what I have been told of his having, at one time, been the advocate of that compulsory assessment which he now condemns. It is sufficient for my purpose to state, that for the enactment of this measure the Church is not in the least degree responsible; and that many of her office-

bearers agree with me in thinking it most prejudicial to the poor, for whose sake its framers professed to have placed it on the statute book. I feel quite certain that a large proportion of our ministers would cheerfully unite in a movement for the repeal of this mischievous Act, if such a thing were proposed to them, not by a person like Sir G. Sinclair, but by a man of consistency, influence, and talent. But I am not endowed with the faculty of understanding what is unintelligible; and I cannot, therefore, discover the force of Sir George's argumentation, that because I disapprove of the new poor law, *ergo!* I should refuse to subscribe to the fund for endowing additional churches, and thus endeavouring to elevate our people above pauperism! Nor, as a believer in the scriptural record of the effect of "the machinery of Christian education" in such cities as Corinth, where "the Legislature had destroyed the distinction betwcen vice and virtue," can I assent to the essentially, though, I doubt not, unintentionally, infidel sentiments with which Sir George winds up his first letter,—"I am, therefore, justified, so far as my own observations have extended, in reiterating my conviction that as the Legislature has destroyed the distinction between vice and virtue, betwecn thrift and recklessness, and has employed all its ingenuity in enabling the worthless to baffle and browbeat the industrious, it is impossible that the mischief can be counteracted by any machinery of Christian education, however complete, or however judicious!" There is a tidbit for Benthamist philosophers, and for all those sceptics who ridicule the idea of the regeneration of the world by the gospel of Christ. If the "lucubrations" of the Baronet are conclusive against Dr. Robertson's endowment scheme, they are no less so against all attempts at missionary enterprise in countries whose "Legislature has destroyed the distinction between vice and virtue," a thing which it is notorious has been done by the Legislature of every heathen nation both in ancient and in modern times!!! Strange, that professing Christians

and members of missionary societies should circulate a pamphlet with these anti-missionary doctrines, simply because it reviles the Church of Scotland! Surely their hatred of the Church must be at least as strong as their love of Christianity!!*

So much as to the argument against the endowment of additional churches because the new poor law is in existence! I must now notice the long and rambling statement which Sir George is so kind as vouchsafe of his own ecclesiastical and religious opinions, in the successive eras of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. The opening sentences of letter 4th exhibit the "early life" of the Baronet, while he was under the care of his "venerable grandmother, Lady Janet," (page 15,) who, from this time forth, must be an object of as widely diffused interest as the most renowned of the female ancestors of great men! Sir George had not as yet been taken captive, as he afterwards was, by Napoleon's soldiers, when, "with feelings which he could not attempt to pourtray," he was assured by the Count who introduced him to the Imperial presence, that he "needed not be afraid, as the Emperor would not eat him,"† and when, as report goes, he was pronounced by the umpire of his fate a person who could not do much harm to any one—the Emperor ought to have added—except to himself!! He had not, at this period, taken his place on the same form of Harrow School which contained Lord Byron and Sir Robert Peel. Hope had not begun to tell her flattering tale of future eminence—that tale which was so cruelly disappointed in afterlife—that Sir James Stephen has remarked, in his recently published book, that Sir G. Sinclair is a striking instance of the rarity of clever boys becoming men of true distinction. The future Baronet is presented to us as a mere child; and we find

* The Baronet's Free advisers seem to have discovered the infidel character of the passage which I have quoted, and to have made him append an explanatory paragraph in his second edition.

† Memoirs of Sir John Sinclair, vol. 2, page 175.

him conning the pages of the Edinburgh Almanac, "especially" those "in which the designations of the lay patrons of the Church of Scotland were blazed abroad." "The goodly catalogue excited his lively interest;" and he, "during many years thereafter, rejoiced in reflecting how secure that Church must be" which could boast of a roll of patrons in which was to be found beside such entries as "Crown, Earl of Findlater, Duke of Gordon," the still more delightful designation of Baronet of Ulbster, seven times repeated, he being then the patron of no fewer than seven parishes Happy Church (page 17,) thought the future Baronet. Happy Church, of which, if I live, I shall be an extensive patron! The boy was father to the man: for in that sketch of "early life" we have the same lineaments as appear in this senile pamphlet, where we read (page 11) of "my excellent friend Lord Aberdeen;" (page 42) of "the dearest and most attached friend whom I ever had in this world, the late Sir F. Burdett, who invited a number of leading M.P.'s to his hospitable board, of whom (leading M.P.'s!!) he, as usual, expected I should be one;" (page 48) of "my kind-hearted and munificent relative (Highland cousin?) the Duke of Sutherland;"* and, to crown all (page 21,) of "a Monarch who long honoured me with his friendship!!!"† I must have the virtue to

* The Duke is introduced again, in page 55 of the second edition, as "my excellent kinsman!" The present patriotic and noble-minded Lord of Sutherland is the 23d Earl, and Sir George is the great great grandson of the 16th Earl!!

† I have alluded, in the Preface, to the note which is inserted at this point, in the second edition. It is truly humiliating to think that it was indited by a being of one's own species. We learn from it that the writer "enjoyed, in a very high degree, the friendship of the Duke of Clarence, there being few persons whom his Royal Highness welcomed to his house with equal cordiality, or with whom he conversed on all! subjects so freely and unreservedly." "Often" did he say to him, "Sinclair, you are an honest man, and an able one too, but, take my word for it, (truer word never was uttered,) you will never do for a Minister of State!!" Sir George did not resent this most quizzical speech, "but, on the contrary, felt persuaded that his Royal Highness (whom he was *green* enough to fancy in earnest) had assigned, in this brief sentence, two very adequate reasons (viz., that he, Sir George, was 1st, honest, and 2d, able!!!) for the conclusion at which he arrived." Time wore

resist the temptation of following up these quotations with an extract from Mr. Punch's papers on "Tuft-hunting Snobs," and must proceed to observe that during "many years" subsequent to his youthful studies in the Almanac, Sir George, by his own confession, was not only a warm admirer of Church Patronage, as well became the heir to seven patronages, but likewise a very uncharitable adversary of all Dissenters, "carefully avoiding," as he tells us (page 16) "their acquaintance," feeling a positive "repugnance to their ministrations," and (page 18) "taking it for granted! that their unpatronised and unprotected congregations must be entirely composed of turbulent and worldly-minded latitudinarians, who, disgusted by the strictness

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on, and the Duke became King. At this period, our Baronet met "an acquaintance at Edinburgh," who said to him, "Well, your friend is King now." He replied, "Yes; but is the King my friend?" and "on his return home, he endeavoured to preserve the remembrance of this occurrence by writing some verses, which he at the time sent to several friends," and which, though most miserable doggerel, he now prints, to the amusement of his readers! "Nothing could exceed the new monarch's kindness towards himself and his family," till "most unfortunately, in many respects, for himself," and the like for "the county," he was elected to represent it in Parliament, when an appalling persecution fell to his lot!! and he "certainly felt a pang," which even his "excellent and much respected friend (had he been a Duke, he would have said—kinsman) the present Marquis of Cholmondeley," aye, and "Lady Denbigh" to boot, were not able to prevent, though the Marquis, to gratify his tuft-hunting propensities, actually honoured him by walking in his company out of the House of Commons!! And what, then, was the torture under which this "able man," this "leading M.P." was condemned to writhe? Why, it was his not being asked, along with his "wife and daughter," to "St. James's Palace!!" With touching piety, he now records, after an interval of some 17 years, that "he was enabled to rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer" this, on account of his Anti-patronage Knight errantry! He had his reward, when, "after the lapse of some time," he, by a most rapid whirl in his State politics, once more enjoyed the sweets of a courtly sycophant, which he took good care not to lose again, so long as the King lived. But Victoria knows him not, so he is now in "sad and sorrowful seclusion," and he appends this note to his second edition, in the hope that "the pious and well-trained peasantry" of the North (whose "alarming progress in thriftlessness, sullenness, intemperance, and sloth," he tells us, in page 6, "seems to be on all hands acknowledged,") might have (page 13) "an intimate knowledge of the vicissitudes experienced by their Church, the sufferings inflicted on its martyrs, and the tyranny exercised by its oppressors!!!"

with which the rigid doctrines of the national standards were everywhere promulgated in the Established Church," "could no longer endure sound doctrine, but, after their own lusts, heaped to themselves teachers having itching ears!!" "For a long time" did the Baronet retain these not very creditable impressions; but a change at length came over the spirit of his dream, and he became a bitter enemy of patronage, and a warm friend of Dissenters. He "took an active part (page 20) in the very first movements of the Anti-Patronage Society;" "advocated in Parliament (page 21) the total abolition of lay patronage;" was "completely foiled (page 24) in this field of conflict;" and "uniformly found (page 40) when conducting, as Chairman, the proceedings of the Church Patronage Committee, or discussing that subject, either publicly, or from house to house, that every politician of every class and country regarded that subject (Sir George's mode of treating it?) as exceedingly tedious and distasteful!" During his Quixotic attack upon the system of patronage which he had "for many years" supported, our chameleon Baronet cherished those Dissenters whom he had previously abhorred, "invited the late seceding clergyman of Thurso (a gentleman! who was wont to fill, with his own hands, the carts which came to carry off the contents of his pit of ashes and other materials not fit to be named to ears polite) to dinner," and was of opinion "that the extensive secessions from the Church which took place prior to the late Disruption were entirely owing to the laxity and want of faithfulness exhibited to so fearful an extent during several generations by the office-bearers of the Established Church, and in no degree to any fickleness, heterodoxy, or precipitation on the part of the tens of thousands of her most pious children, by whom her communion was reluctanly but resolutely abandoned" (page 21.) Sir George did not cast in his lot with these "most pious children of the Church," but continued to adhere to her, though he believed her to have been, for "several generations," corrupt and unfaithful. His "early convictions, that religion can-

not flourish in any country without an Established Church, remained unshaken; and ever since the Disruption, which carried away from its pale the men whom he most loved and venerated, he has never ceased to attend its ministrations" (page 24,) having resisted the attractions of (page 30) his "excellent and eloquent friend, David Burn, the minister of the Secession congregation." He was, on the 3d of November last (page 16,) "an Erastian," and on the 8th of the same month (pages 32 33,) something very like a keen Voluntary. The latest intelligence which we gain from his Postscript and Preface would lead us to believe that he had not formally abjured our communion in the month of December. But he then had, and probably still has, a great dislike to patronage and the Church, and a strong inclination for the popular election and voluntary maintenance of ministers.

Such, Sir, is the statement which Sir George himself has given of the manifold vicissitudes which have occurred in his ecclesiastical and religious opinions. *Non meus hic sermo.* Before I dismiss this branch of my subject, I must be excused for expressing my regret that the Baronet has omitted to mention that his conversion to anti-patronage sentiments was about the same date as the compulsory sale of *six* of the patronages which belonged to his family. This interesting and curious coincidence, in point of time, was well worthy of a place in his narrative. I don't say that the sale of the Ulbster patronages was the cause of his change of opinion, for I verily believe that many of his changes had no cause except the innate fickleness of his mind. But I do maintain that no one ought to pay the slightest attention to the last turnings of this quaint old weathercock. In Caithness, where he is well known, I am assured he is wholly disregarded; and his present denunciations of the Church are of as little practical effect as his ormer ravings against the Free Secession, when he stood forward as the very paragon of site refusers, and printed a letter entitled (if I can trust my memory,) "Reasons for

Refusing to Sanction the Erection of a Schismatical Church on My Property." Sir George is a very small man, in his own county, and the people are in the habit of saying of him that he has much less resemblance to his "venerable grandmother, Lady Janet," (page 5,) who was a woman of considerable vigour of intellect, and of great good sense, than he has to a male ancestor, Sinclair of Harpsdale, whom a witty laird once persuaded that the colour of his horse was *green*, and who was in the practice of walking about in the sultry and breathless days of summer with his hat carefully bound down to his head by a napkin passed over its crown,—a custom which the sage old precursor of our Baronet was wont to defend by the exclamation—"A blast may come!" But enough, for the day, of the "lucubrations" of Harpsdale's representative, alike in body and in mind. I hope to resume this subject in your next number; and, in the meanwhile, I beg to subscribe myself —yours, very obediently,

INVESTIGATOR.

28th March, 1850.

No. II.

SIR,—My apology for having occupied so large a portion of my letter of yesterday in strictures on Sir G. Sinclair's account of his own ecclesiastical and religious opinions, is my desire that the public should be thoroughly aware of the utter absurdity of attaching the slightest value to the testimony of the hon. Baronet against the Church, in so far as that testimony depends, in any degree, for its importance upon the character of the person by whom it is borne. With an infatuation to which it is scarcely possible to apply too strong an epithet, Sir George spends many pages in describing the endless changes of which his mind has been the subject, and has not even the discretion to conceal that, in the course of the few days which were occupied in writing his letters, he was alternating between

"Erastianism" and "Voluntaryism."* "Drowning men," says the proverb, "catch at straws;" and, of a truth, the enemies of our Church must be at the last gasp, if they endeavour to clutch at this straw, which, by the confession of the individual best acquainted with its movements, has been "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine"—a most appropriate description of one who, like the Baronet of Ulbster, has continued from infancy to old age "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

But it may be said that, though Sir George's personal opinion of the "position and prospects" of our Church is absolutely worthless, his statistical details of her condition in the North are deserving of credit, inasmuch as he communicates the important information (page 2) that, "during the last four and a-half years, he has never been for a single day absent from the parish" of Thurso, and must, therefore, be supposed to be capable of forming an accurate estimate of the number of the adherents of the Church in the district in which he has resided. Besides, it may be urged that he has given distinct and specific tables of the attendance at the various Churches in the northern counties, which we are not entitled to reject as fictitious or false. "Speak to us, forsooth," say the Free Seceders, "of the importance of maintaining and even extending the Establishment. Why, by the testimony of good Sir George Sinclair, who is one of the few truly pious men still remaining in your Residuary, it is a mere *caput mortuum* in the northern counties, and the statistics which that Lot in the midst of your Sodom has felt himself constrained to publish, conclusively prove that almost the whole of the people in his neighbourhood have deserted from your ranks

* We have a most grotesque interpolation as to this matter, in page 20 of the 2d edition. I give the richest bit:—"I have sometimes thought that it might form a legitimate and interesting subject for discussion at a debating society,—Whether Principal Robertson or Dr. Thomson, Lord Aberdeen or Sir George Sinclair (*par nobile fratrum*,) had carried Erastianism to the greatest extent!!" I had rather discuss the colour of Harpsdale's horse!!

and enlisted themselves in ours." I stay not to comment upon the appropriateness of such language from the lips of men who, a few years ago, loaded Sir George with an accumulation of abuse, such as, I venture to affirm, he never before had heaped upon him by any of the numerous parties which he in succession supported and opposed. Neither do I inquire whether the Baronet was adroitly preparing to enact the part of Lot, in the Free Drama, when he spoke (page 24) of "all the mental distress and discomfort which I have from year to year experienced, from seeing what passes here, and learning what occurs around me," and of its being "impossible to witness without some shame and much sorrow the state of the Church in this county." I dismiss the themes at which I have hinted, and proceed to remark upon Sir George's statistics of the present "position" of the Church in the north, the avowed design of which is to persuade the public that our Church's Endowment Scheme should be abandoned, because the parish churches of the north are nearly empty, and the ministers without congregations, in consequence of the entire population, with the exception of a most insignificant fraction, having gone over to the Free Seceders, and adopted the resolution that in no conceivable circumstances will they ever return to the Church from which they have seceded.

Now, I beg to observe, in the first place, that even granting the statistics of the Baronet to be accurate, and receiving his predictions of what is to happen in the north as infallible, our Church's Endowment Scheme is not in the least degree affected by the gratuitous concessions which, for argument's sake, I have made. For nothing is further from the mind of the Church than to expend the funds of the endowment scheme in providing additional churches and ministers for parishes where ample Church accommodation is already within the reach of the people, and where the existing supply of pastoral superintendence is adequate to the wants of the community. Sir George knows, and

when he wrote his letters, knew, as well as I do, that he, in common with the other heritors of Scotland, received an application from the Endowment Committee, for a subscription, not with the view of his contribution being employed in a parish like Thurso, where, he tells us (page 6,) "religious instruction is at its *maximum*," but in order that his donation might be made available for those districts in which, notwithstanding all the efforts both of the Church and of Dissenters, thousands are perishing for lack of knowledge. The true state of the case may be pointed out in a few words. The Baronet had professed himself a patriot, a Churchman, and a Christian. He had often enlarged, both in Parliament and out of it, on the inestimable importance of using all the means in our power for leavening the mass of our population, alike in town and country, with the blessed truths of the gospel. He had spoken and acted as if he was really persuaded of what he informs us (page 14) he "did believe, with the most unwavering acquiescence, that an Established Church is in every country as indispensable to the very existence of religion, as the sun is at mid-day in the firmament for the evolution of light and heat." He had let it be known that he had (page 24) "never entered the door of the Free Church, nor subscribed to any of its schemes, nor taken in any of its publications." It was therefore charitably concluded that he did "take in" some at least of "the publications" of the Church of which he was an office-bearer, and that he would not be indisposed to "subscribe" to her "schemes." The Endowment Committee ventured to assume that he had read the reports of the Home Mission Committee, in which accurate details were annually presented of the remarkable increase of members and hearers which had occurred in many of the unendowned churches which were scattered over Scotland. They accordingly requested this gentleman, who professed to have (page 15) "cherished, under all circumstances, an almost superstitious attachment for the Established Church," and who declared that "he still con-

tinued to cleave to it in the season of peril and conflict"—they begged of this zealous Churchman! who said he had (page 24) "endeavoured to do all that he could to assist the cause of the Establishment, and discountenance the plans of its opponents"*—they asked him to cast in his mite into the endowment treasury, and were favoured in reply, not with an egg of gold, but with this venomous serpent of a pamphlet, from which I am endeavouring to extract the sting! And a wretched piece of mechanism that sting is! A single touch utterly destroys its efficiency. It has no more point against the present endowment scheme than against Dr. Chalmers's Church Extension enterprise. The Voluntaries of that day opposed the Doctor's movement, on the plea of additional churches and ministers being unnecessary, when Dr. Cunningham, Dr. J. G. Lorimer, Mr. James Gibson, Mr. Abercromby Gordon of Aberdeen, and many others who were then Established, but are now Free, ministers, were preaching to long rows of empty benches. Sir G. Sinclair was one of the loudest denunciators of this opposition, and professed to be unable to comprehend how it could be a good argument against providing an additional church and minister for a destitute locality, that there were other localities where, as he now affirms is the case in Thurso, (page 5,) "very pleasing, amiable, and highly gifted ministers" had empty churches, "the church accommodation" being "enough" for "at least 19 in 20 of the entire population." I appeal from the Baronet of Ulbster and his Free Secession allies in 1850 to the same Baronet and the same allies when they

* Sir George himself, in a published letter, dated the 28th of February last, gives the following statement of his exertions to "assist the cause of the Establishment, and to discountenance the plans of its opponents:"—"When my late revered friend, Mr. Munro (the Free minister) was about to relinquish the manse of Halkirk, I wrote a letter requesting that Mrs. M. and he would gratify us by taking up their residence at this house for a few weeks, or months, until a suitable dwelling was provided for him in that parish; and adding, that I would send him, in my own carriage, every Lord's day, to his church, and as often as he pleased, during the week."

were reprobating Voluntaryism, and supporting Dr. Chalmers's Church Extension Scheme, some 13 or 14 years ago; and I tell them that, if this meaningless pamphlet is intended to convey the impression that it is absurd to endow additional churches and ministers in destitute localities now, because there are many desolate places of worship in the northern counties, it was not one whit less absurd for them to contend for Dr. Chalmers's Church Extension Scheme, when many of the very leading orators of the Free Secession (*inter alios*, Dr. Candlish himself, before he came to Edinburgh,) were, Sabbath after Sabbath, holding forth in (page 3) "spacious and elegant churches," where there were far more pews than hearers, and where, I take the liberty of adding, there are, at this period, Residuary! congregations vastly more numerous than before the "Disruption," the "Residue" being much larger than the whole mass when unbroken!!!

I must not, however, overlook the fact, that Sir George's statement of the ecclesiastical and moral condition of the people around him has a much more direct and obvious bearing against the Free Secession than it can have against the General Assembly's Endowment movement. For, what is the purport of that testimony on account of which the Baronet's pamphlet has been lauded and circulated by the adversaries of our Church? Is it not that, in the northern counties, the adherents of the Church are so few that they do not amount to (page 29) "one-twentieth of the population," while the Free Secession ministers have almost the whole people under their care? Our Free friends rejoice in repeating this, on Sir George's authority, and I make them heartily welcome to their witness. But, if he be deserving of credit as to the ecclesiastical, surely he is no less trustworthy as to the moral statistics of his vicinity. And what does he say as to the moral condition of this portion of the community, in which, according to him, the Free Secession is triumphant, and the members of the Church are not in the proportion of one to twenty?

Why, he testifies (page 6) that "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought are universally admitted to be on the increase!!" Now, if this be true, as the Free Seceders who have been so lavish in their recommendations of Sir George's pamphlet can scarcely have the hardihood to deny, it will follow, that a devoted adherence to the Free Secession is by no means a presumption in favour of a man's morality, and that the extension of that body is not very closely connected with the moral well-being of our nation. But I cannot see how the concurrence which the Baronet has declared to exist between the prevalence of the Free Secession and the increase of drunkenness can have any bearing against the scheme for promoting the efficiency of our Church by endowing her chapels of ease, when she is comparatively little involved in the responsibility attached to the increasing demoralisation of the north, since, according to Sir George, she has not one-twentieth of the population within her pale. I don't pretend that Sir George represents the rampant Free Churchism of his neighbourhood as the cause of the increase of its drunkenness, for that he traces to the new poor law. But the facts are unquestionable—first, that "Sir G. Sinclair's testimony," as it is styled by the Free Church Magazine, contains, in the opinion of the said Magazine, and of a large proportion of the sect of which it is an organ, "candid evidence;" and secondly, that the Baronet attests that, in the north, where the Free Church, he tells us, reigns paramount, "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought are universally admitted to be on the increase." I have far better authority than that of Sir George in my possession, and I therefore believe that his description of the morals of his district stands out as an oasis of truth in the midst of a vast desert of falsehood. I shall have occasion to advert to this topic, in another letter. In the meantime, I have said enough to prove that Sir George's statistics, if correct, may damage the character of the Free Church movement, but do not in the least degree militate against the Endowment Scheme of the Church of Scotland.

But, Sir, I have no faith in the accuracy of the details which the pamphlet presents of the attendance at our churches in the north. They appear to me to have on their front the brand of gross and glaring incorrectness. Sir George neither dares to say that he himself counted the congregations of which he speaks (except in the case of Thurso, and that not on a Sabbath,) nor does he venture to give the names of those who "did his dirty work" for him; and I am therefore entitled to say that the computation was very probably made, either by determined and unscrupulous enemies of our Church, from whose morality we cannot expect much, after "the testimony" on which I have commented, or that it was got up by wicked wags who were anxious to ascertain whether the "secluded country gentleman" whom they had selected as their dupe was as credulous as his predecessor, Harpsdale, who was so *green* as to exercise implicit credence in his neighbour's jocular assertion about the colour of his horse! I don't believe these statistics, on account of the infamous way in which many of them seem to have been collected. I learn, from page 58, that at least nine different persons were engaged, on two successive Sabbaths, in numbering the hearers in the parochial churches of Caithness. They come before me as Sabbath-breakers and profaners of religious ordinances, and I regard their evidence as quite as likely to be false as true. Besides, their "returns" seem unfair, even at a first glance; so unfair, that I can scarcely be charitable enough to think that they imposed upon Harpsdale's worthy representative!! Sure am I that no man of ordinary intelligence can submit them to the most hasty examination, and fail to perceive that they are not deserving of credit. Here is one circumstance which appears on the very face of the "returns," that the attendance at church in the extensive parishes of Caithness, on two Sabbaths in the month of December, is represented as the average attendance, or rather, in several instances, above it, throughout the year;—(compare the table in

page 26 with that in page 58,)—while it is unquestionable that in the smallest of the southern parishes, nay, even in our towns, the congregations are less numerous at that season than at any other. And here is another black mark upon these vaunted "returns," that they state the average attendance at Wick as only 302, although they themselves bear that in the two December Sabbaths on which the computation was made, there were present, in the afternoon of the former day, 350, and in that of the latter day, 511! This would have given an average of 430, which Sir George and his Sabbath-breaking allies know full well to be a long way below the truth. But it occurred to them that they might reduce the average by slumping the numbers of the forenoon and afternoon congregations, and accordingly they adopted that plan, without having the common honesty to hint that, for the last twenty years, the attendance in Wick church has been far larger in the after than in the former part of the day!!!

My time and space, and, I fear, your patience, are exhausted for the present, so I must not prolong my strictures upon these most fallacious statistics. I think I have proved that they are not deserving of credit, and that if they were, they would tell, not against our Endowment Scheme, but against the Free Secession movement. Still, I am far from denying that the adherents of our Church in the northern counties are much less numerous than in districts of corresponding size and populousness in the south. The explanation of this difference will lead to some extraordinary revelations as to the true character of Sir George's neighbours, and will occupy my next letter.—I remain, yours very obediently,

INVESTIGATOR.

29th March, 1850.

No. III.

SIR,—My design in this letter is to bring under your notice those circumstances which seem to me to account for the comparative weakness of our Church in the north of Scotland. I rejoice to be able to adduce the "candid evidence," as the Free Church Magazine says, of Sir G Sinclair, that this is not to be ascribed to anything reprehensible in the present parochial ministers. A person of ordinary intelligence and candour would neither have entertained nor expressed surprise, if the sudden secession of a very large proportion of the incumbents of our northern parishes had led to the appointment of inferior men as their successors. The Ulbster Baronet, however, has afforded us the strongest reasons for presuming that, if he had been able to insinuate that such a result had occurred, he would not have been slow to make it the theme of fierce and indignant invective. But, with every disposition to paint the Church in the blackest colours, he is constrained to admit that the minister of Thurso, whom he is careful to describe as a person whom "I, as patron, selected," is an "excellent and exemplary clergyman," who gives forth "edifying instructions" (page 2;) "a very pleasing, amiable, and highly-gifted minister" (page 5;) "a minister in every respect ably qualified to discharge the duties of his office" (page 7.) Nay, though at a period previous to the secession he had been "informed, by a late worthy minister of Reay, that, many years ago, he was the only one of the ten ministers of Caithness who strictly and habitually preached Calvinistic doctrine," (page 19,) he cannot but confess that, now, "those of the clergy connected with the Establishment whom" he has "had the advantage of hearing, preach, so far as" he "may be permitted to judge, the doctrines of the gospel, in strict conformity with the standards of the Church," (page 12;) while their whole conduct is so entirely in accordance with what becomes their sacred office, that even those Free Seceding bigots, who "never attend their ministra-

tions, even when, from any special causes, there happens to be no service in their own place of worship," (page 12,) even they "do not question the truth of what" he has "often urged as to the piety and respectability of the different members of" Caithness "Presbytery" (page 10.) I really cannot imagine a less restricted panegyric than the Baronet thus bestows upon our northern ministers; and I am more than warranted by what he says, when I affirm, upon his testimony, that those ministers are not in the slightest degree to blame for the limited number of our Church's adherents in the various parishes in which they labour. Sir George certainly places them in most favourable contrast with the general population, of which he tells us (page 10) "an overwhelming majority" is "connected with the Free Church;" for while the ministers of our Church are, according to him, men of "piety and respectability," he speaks, as I showed in my last letter, of "the increase of idleness and drunkenness" among the Free community in which he dwells, as a thing which is "universally admitted!" It is true, indeed, the Baronet, in many portions of his pamphlet, lavishes abuse upon the self same pious and respectable and strictly orthodox clergy, just as he extols to the skies, "as pious patriarchs," (page 12,) the people amongst whom idleness and drunkenness are increasing!! But his charges against our ministers are all resolvable into the one grand offence of endeavouring to secure augmentations to their stipends. For this they are stigmatised, I know not how often, as "terrible as an army with banners (the unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction) to the corporations and heritors whom they are unceasingly harassing with unreasonable demands," as "grasping," "tenacious of temporal advantages," "reckless in their exactions," and "too generally worldly-minded." No one who has the patience to peruse all this tirade can have the shadow of a doubt that it is by their application for a larger share than they at present enjoy of the Church property in the possession

of Sir George Sinclair, that the ministers of Caithness have brought upon themselves his obloquy. "*Rem, rem, quocunque modo, rem,*" is the Baronet's motto; he detests the new poor law, for it deprives him of money; he "has never subscribed to any of the Free Church schemes" (page 24;) he buttons up his pockets when Dr. Robertson asks him for a donation to the Endowment Fund ;* and, in perfect consistency (which is more than can be said of him with reference to any other matter,) he vomits forth a foaming torrent of abusive language upon the whole of the parochial clergy of the north, because some of them have been so audacious as to call upon him, in the legal way, to disgorge a morsel or two of those ecclesiastical revenues which he is annually swallowing!! But, though Sir George and his like-minded correspondents, whose letters he quotes, have a sore grudge at the clergy, in consequence of their augmentation processes, this feeling can have no existence among the mass of the people, and it does not deserve any notice as a source of weakness to the Church in the north. At all events, we have the explicit testimony of the Baronet himself (page 38,) that the applications for augmentations have not had the slightest effect in driving the people to the Free Secession, to which "the great mass of the inhabitants" belong, for "the heritors (upon whom the augmentations exclusively fall) are almost unanimous in keeping aloof from it." I need not trouble you with additional remarks on this subject, as I have certainly said more than enough to prove that, Sir George himself being witness, the present parochial incumbents are not the parties to blame for the limited number of our Church's adherents in the northern counties of Scotland.

The truth is, that the ecclesiastical condition of the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, and Ross, and of part of

* "Said Sir George ——, Baronet, to the Dr.—you'll get
Not a sixpence of mine—you're a rascally set."
—*Unpublished Satire.*

Inverness, has long been exceedingly strange, and altogether anomalous. Up till the Free Secession in 1843, the Dissenters constituted a very small fraction of the people. Nineteen-twentieths of the population professed to be Churchmen, and protested that they would never forsake the religious body in which they and their fathers had been enrolled. A preacher could scarcely select a more popular theme of pulpit address than emphatic and intolerant denunciation of all Dissenting denominations. I could name several persons who heard a northern minister of the Church, who has since seceded, speak, in the course of a sermon on the Saturday before a communion, of "the wretched, rotten-hearted Seceders;" while I have equally abundant evidence that his brother, who is still a Free minister in the north, spoke, on another sacramental occasion, of "Baptists, Independents, Seceders, Papists, and all that trash!!" These two orators were fully as acceptable to the "pious patriarchs" of the north as "the late eminent! Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh" (page 23;) and their maledictions of all Dissenters were familiar as household words to their numerous admirers. And yet, both they and their votaries were Dissenters of the most dangerous description — Dissenters within the Church. They constantly declared that the Church was full of corruptions, and that her services had no longer that spiritual life and power which belonged to them in the days of this and that "great man," in a former generation, who "had much experience" (to use their cant phrase,) having frequently maintained direct personal conflicts with "the enemy of souls," who appeared to them sometimes as a "dog," at other times as a "horse," and, on one recorded occasion, as "a boatsail!!!" The fruit of this teaching saw exhibited in the very general desertion of the communion table, to which the "overwhelming majority" of the people never thought of repairing. In parishes, with populations of several thousands, and scarcely a handful of *avowed* Dissenters, the communicants in connection

with the Church did not exceed from 100 to 200!! When the Veto Law required that a roll of male heads of families in communion with the Church should be kept by each Kirk Session, it was common to find, in a population of some 2000 and upwards, a list of from thirteen to twenty. This can be proved from the Session Records, which are still in existence, and of which some of our ministers in the north would do well to send a note to the newspapers. Is it not clear from what I have stated as to the Church membership of the northern counties, before the Secession, that the Church was in a most unhealthy state in these districts for many years previous to 1843; and that though comparatively few of the people *had* declared themselves Dissenters, the Church would have been seen to be weak indeed, if its strength had been tested by the number of its communicants? Sir George Sinclair has the candour to conceal all this, though he speaks of the communicants of Thurso as miserably few since the Secession! Why does he scrupulously shun the faintest allusion to their number before that event? The reason is obvious. If he had told the simple truth, of which he was perfectly cognisant, he would have found it impossible to give vent, through this pamphlet, to his indignation against those ministers who have threatened him with demands for augmentations, as all whom folly or faction had not rendered purblind would have seen that the multitudes whom he represents as having deserted the Church in the north, did never, in reality, belong to her communion.*

I am aware, however, that it may be said that though the Church had few communicants, she had many hearers, while it is otherwise now. Sir George does his utmost to bring out this circumstance in the way best calculated to

* Sir George speaks (page 3) of the people of the North as having "abandoned the communion" of the Church! Let me borrow his own words in the preceding lines, and "ask any man of conscience and candour whether" a person can "abandon a communion" to which he never belonged?

injure the Christian body of which he himself is "an office-bearer," as well as to lacerate the feelings of the "blameless," and "amiable," and "excellent clergyman," upon whose ministrations he and his family attend. He gloats (page 3) over a picture which he draws of the contrast between the present and the past aspect of the Church of Thurso, on a sacramental week, and he literally revels in a repetition of the scene, in page 37. I should like to be made aware of the considerations which induced him to abstain from a fuller notice of the exercises of a Thurso communion season, ere "the Ten Years' Conflict" had been begun, or when it was just beginning. Has he never heard of the Thurso summer communion in 1833, and of the edifying exhibition which the proceedings at it afforded of the strength derived by the Church from the number of her hearers? My investigations have made me thoroughly acquainted with the details of that sacramental occasion, and I think a short and simple narrative of them may serve as a sort of companion picture to that highly finished and cunningly set work of art to which I have referred, and which is contemplated with extreme satisfaction and complacency by its accomplished author —our versatile Baronet. The attendance on all the preaching days was enormous; and on the Sabbath upwards of 6000 persons were assembled, with the professed intention of taking part in the solemnity. The entire population of the parish, as is stated by Sir George (page 3,) did not amount to 5000, and in this number were included a congregation of Independents, another of Baptists, a third of Cameronians, as well as (page 30) the "numerous hearers" of the Baronet's "excellent and eloquent friend, David Burn, the minister of the Secession congregation."* Whence, then, you will ask, came this

* Our Baronet records, to the immortal honour of "David," that "he is perfectly satisfied with an income of £100 a-year." If the parish ministers of Caithness would but imitate his "moderation," they would have Sir George's highest commendation! "David" may well be proud of himself, for the only person with whom this

immense gathering, which was more numerous by upwards of a thousand than all the men, women, and children, of all sects and denominations, in the parish of Thurso? Why, Sir, they congregated from the whole of the neighbouring! district, that is, from all the hamlets within a range of some 20 or 30 miles; while a few of "the men" had travelled twice as far as the longer of these distances. Several of the surrounding parishes sent, that day, more hearers to the Thurso preachers than their own ministers ever saw in their churches, on any Sabbath, except the one of the summer communion.

> "All these, and more, came flocking; but with looks
> Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
> Obscure, some glimpse of joy."

The intellectual food provided for them was as highly seasoned as the northern counties could produce. The present Free minister, who was then in the parochial charge, officiated to a large assembly of English worshippers, in the church. A still more numerous English audience met in the open air, and was addressed by a succession of popular preachers. And a Gaelic congregation, of great size, had the whole of the services of the day, including the dispensation of the communion, in an old churchyard. A superficial observer would have deduced from all this that the strength of the Church, in the district of Thurso, could scarcely be over-estimated. But the strange proceedings of that evening and next forenoon were well fitted to dispel such an illusion.

It so happened that among the English ministers who took part in "the in-door duty," there was a very respectable man, whose appointment to the parish in which he now acts as Free pastor had been peculiarly offensive to the "pious patriarchs" of the north, inasmuch as they had set their hearts on the induction of an orator,

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"able" and "honest" man, and "leading M.P.," seems on such intimate terms, is the Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, whom he styles, in page 47 of the 2d edition, "my friend, Croker!" "Croker and David Burn!!" Sir George's two chums!!!

who, if he had not been deposed by the General Assembly for gross immorality, would have been fully as "eminent" as "the late Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh," (page 23,)* to whom, in the days of his renown, alike in mind and in body, in habits and in opinions, he bore a very marked resemblance. The unfortunate minister who had come in the way of this "most savoury preacher's" promotion, had, in the course of a table address, grievously offended against the dictates of good taste, in the hope of gratifying the desires of his hearers for what was extravagant in sentiment and language, and had spoken of "Christ as having suffered a temporary hell! for his people!!" A meeting of the "pious patriarchs" was summoned after the services of the sanctuary were over, or in other words, about nine o'clock in the evening. They sat as a court of review, and criticised, in the hearing of a number of eager listeners, the various performers during the day. Up rose a great authority, a watchmaker on a very small scale, who attended almost all the communions within an extensive district radiating from his abode, which was about 10 miles from Thurso. He singled out as his victim the unhappy minister who filled the charge which he had destined for his favourite, and declared that they had been listening to "damnable doctrine" that day, one of their pretended instructors having told them that "the sufferings of Christ were trifling;" that, he maintained, being the only sense of which the word "temporary" was susceptible!! The conclave expressed their unanimous assent to this magisterial dictum; and it being known that the offender was to officiate, in English, on the Monday, it was resolved to send a deputation to the manse next morning, with a demand that he should be superseded; or, if that should be

* It deserves to be mentioned, to the honour of the sagacity of the late minister of Carnbee, that he, as Sir George tells us (page 23,) said of Dr. M'Donald, when he was licensed, "I advise you to be on your guard against that lad, or you will find him a very dangerous and troublesome man to deal with." How strikingly did this appear in a "*case*" in no degree connected with the Free Secession movement!

refused, that a rival English orator should be placed in a tent near the church door!! The parochial incumbent was sadly annoyed by the arrival of the deputies, and called a council of his rev. assistants to advise with in the emergency. Some of the most popular of them avowed their concurrence in the criticism of their superiors,* the watchmaker and his associates, and affirmed that temporary mean't 'trifling," and not, as one or two of "the less gifted" said—"for a time!! After hours of hesitation and perplexity, the latter part of the deputation's alternative was adopted; and though the English congregation would not have filled the church, it was determined to station in the tent, at the church door, a celebrated orator, for whom a majority of the eleven male heads of families in communion with the church in the parish of Daviot, with its population of 1681, afterwards *vetoed* two successive presentees,—an orator who was singularly happy in his pulpit invectives against "witches," "ladies' curls," "umbrellas," and other abominations, and who then enjoyed in the north the same enviable repute which, a few months ago, led the Free Church congregation of Brodick to call him as their pastor, and to urge among the reasons for his

* I am indebted, for a striking corroboration of the accuracy of this description, to page 13 of the 2d edition. The Baronet introduces into his "lucubrations" the following exquisite *morceau*:—"I remember once attending, on a week day, a prayer meeting, at the church of Watten. The admirable minister of that parish (the late Rev. Alex Cowan) presided, and he himself conducted the earlier devotional exercises, with his wonted fervour and impressiveness, and then called on me, as an elder, to officiate in my turn, after which he invited some of the country people to pray, who had just suspended their daily toil for the sake of being present. I must own that I not only deeply felt my own palpable inferiority to those comparatively unlettered men,

(Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise,
The dearth of information and good sense,
That it foretells us always comes to pass,)

but thought, as did the excellent minister himself, that he, too, had been surpassed in point of fluency, unction, and simplicity!!" I have only to add that the Watchmaker was one of "tho unlettered," and that Mr. Gunn, whose church he attended, stood forward as his defender, not merely in the clerical council at Thurso manse, but likewise in the Presbytery!! *Dare* this be denied?

translation, that they stood in need of a really superior man, inasmuch as they had a "Ducal residence" in their vicinity, and were annually favoured with "learned and curious visitors!" This far-famed personage (of whom, by the bye, Sir George was an ardent admirer, and who reciprocated the feeling with such cordiality, that he, on one occasion, when George the IV. changed his Ministers, announced to a friend, who is now a Free brother, that "the King was to be put off the Throne, and that there were five candidats for the vacance, but it was thocht George Sinclair o' Ulbster had the best chance!!")—this judicious and well-educated, as well as most eloquent man, was despatched to the tent, just as the bell had rung in, and the effect was electrical, for numbers of "the pious patriarchs" no sooner received telegraphic intelligence of what had occurred, than they, with admirable self-complacency, rose from their seats in the church, where they had ensconced themselves, in ignorance of the stronger attraction which was to be provided out of doors, and in the course of the first psalm, made as regular a "disruption" from the "residuary" within, to the "refreshing" ministrations that were to be had without, as ever was painted in such works of fiction as a Free Church Novel, or a "Flight out of Egypt."

I can scarcely imagine that Sir George has not heard of this memorable scene, which was the occasion of no little discussion in the Presbytery, a threat being held forth that a regular prosecution for heresy would be raised against the hapless man who had assigned to the word "temporary" the sense of "for a time."!! If the Baronet was in blessed ignorance of what I have detailed, when he wrote his pamphlet, his testimony as to the unfavourable contrast between the state of the Church before and after 1843 is worthless, since it will, in that case, follow, that he was not sufficiently informed to be able to draw a correct comparison. If he knew it, the inference must be

that he should give himself to the careful study of the 9th commandment. But whatever may be the decision as to him, I think I may assume that both you and your readers will agree with me that "there was something rotten" in the Constitution of the Church in the north, long before the recent Secession; that, while it had very few communicants, its hearers were full of folly and fanaticism—that the pastors were the veriest slaves and drudges to their people,—and that the population of Thurso and the surrounding district was as far from being sincerely and intelligently attached to the National Church then, as now.—I remain, yours very obediently,

3d April, 1850. INVESTIGATOR.

No. IV.

SIR,—The scene at the Thurso Communion, in 1833, which I pourtrayed in the concluding paragraphs of my last letter, afforded a striking exhibition of the morbid and miserable condition of the Church in the North, during those "former and happier days" of which Sir George Sinclair speaks in his 3d and 37th pages—days when, in his opinion, the adherents of the Church, and especially those of them who attended at Thurso, on Sacramental occasions, were "distinguished by ardent zeal and enlightened! piety"—days for the return of which the Free Demosthenes, or Massilon's favourite among the "five candidates for the throne," professes to sigh, in the midst of his intense "augmentation"– caused anguish—days which he places in most unfavourable contrast with the present times, when, alas! and alack-a-day! unreasonable ministers are audaciously demanding, in accordance with the claims of law and equity, that he should pay to them, "Moderates" and Residuaries though they be, some small portion of those ecclesiastical revenues which are in his possession, and which he had, as appears from pages 24,

29, 30, and, indeed, from three-fourths of the pamphlet, fondly hoped to have retained, without challenge, as his own!!*

I have been at no little trouble to acquire accurate information as to the proceedings of Sir George's "pious patriarchs," and their most valued pastors, during Sacramental seasons; and the results are so startling, that I could not have ventured to commit them to paper, if I had not been absolutely certain of their entire accordance with truth. The sketch in my last letter was that of an English congregation in Thurso, that enviable parish of which our Baronet is the patron and principal heritor, as well as an elder. It will be but fair that I now attempt to delineate a Gaelic Sacramental assemblage, and since the parish of Latheron is introduced by Sir George into his pamphlet (page 53) as one in which the recent Secession has proved peculiarly disastrous to the Church, I shall select, as my specimen, the congregation which, before 1843, was wont to meet there, when the period of the summer communion came round. The English attendance was large in itself, though it seemed small when compared with the vast multitude of Gaelic-speaking Celts, which covered a large space of what was called the hill of Latheron, where the whole of the services of the sacramental Sabbath, including the dispensation of the elements, took place under the open canopy of heaven. From what I have been told, I am inclined to believe that this was emphatically "the occasion," as it was styled, not for Latheron merely, but for a very wide district of the North. "The men" uniformly mustered in full force—indeed, one could scarcely be regarded as having secured a claim to belong to their all-powerful fraternity, until he had been announced at a Latheron

* It is right to explain that, in consequence of his having a large amount of Teind in his own possession, as well as on account of the terms on which his ancestors sold many of their lands, Sir George is likely to have to pay a considerable amount of money to the Church. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*

communion as one of "the he-goats,"—a phrase sometimes employed to describe those leaders of the common herd. Of that herd, thousands upon thousands flocked to the well-known tryst, and rich indeed was the pasture with which they were regaled. Service began about half-past 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and from 1825 to 1835 (to which term of years my remarks apply) the orator who presided, and who, it is right to mention, was not the minister of the parish, was not surpassed in popularity by any man ever seen in the Highlands of Scotland. The action sermon was generally concluded in the course of two and a-half hours after he had entered the tent, which constituted his pulpit. To give you a faint idea of his preaching, I may relate the particulars under one of the heads of a famous sermon of his, on the words "Fear not, little flock, &c." He was explaining "Why they were called—little," and branched out as follows:—"1st, Because they were few in number;" "2d, Because they are little in the eyes of the world;" "3d, Because they are little in their own eyes;' and so forth till he reached his darling "7th, Because, while the poor carnal world made a long prayer on the Sabbath night do for the whole week, they used a little prayer and a little grace every day!!" Upon such themes would this "great man," as the people thought him, and as Sir George Sinclair professed to esteem him, dilate by the hour; the good sense and "enlightened piety" of his matter being enforced by the irresistible charms of hair carefully brushed down over the forehead, of gesture bearing a very striking resemblance to what one can imagine exhibited by that most useful and ingenious modern invention—the gutta percha baby-jumper; and above all, of a voice which, every minute, joined to articulate sounds certain characteristic grunts, of which, written language, even in this age of phonography, is wholly incapable of furnishing a proper symbol. None of his hearers complained of him as tedious, though to the two and a-half hours' music to which I have referred, there

succeeded a good hour of "Fencing the tables." This was the masterpiece of the Gaelic *Nonpareil*. He denounced and debarred, in succession, "witches," of whom he had much to say, "pipers," who, he averred, would carry their instruments to another world as badges of their crime, "young women with curls," of which decoration he was in the habit of declaring that there was "many a curl in the Devil's wig," "persons who put two fingers into their neighbour's snuff-box, and only one into their own," and, worse than all, "ministers with head knowledge," against whom he exultingly quoted—"I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," which he interpreted as signifying that "they would not beg their bread, or seek head knowledge from books!!!" The fencing was wound up with awful threatenings against those who intended to communicate, and with sundry not indistinct hints that the best of the congregation would abstain from the sacramental feast. The effect speedily became manifest. Not an individual approached the table, which had been empty during the whole of the preliminary exercises. A few verses were sung, and a short address of some 10 or 15 minutes was uttered, in which the communicants were invited to come forward, but were, at the same time, given to understand that they had much better stay away. Another psalm followed, with the same result as before. Then came a fresh address, like the former one, to which there succeeded a little more singing; and so on, in some instances, till it was long past four o'clock in the afternoon, and yet no one had taken his seat at the first table!

At last, a commotion might be discerned in one part of the crowd. It was soon discovered to have its origin in the very slow, and, indeed, scarcely perceptible, progress towards the communion table of two or three of "the men," habited in their universally-recognised uniform of a camlet cloak and a spotted cotton pocket-handkerchief tied over the head. Onward they came, with half-closed

eyes, and faces bent towards the ground, in all the pride of voluntary humility. The herd followed the "he goats,' for their footsteps were tracked by male and female votaries, and the table was full. From that time till the termination of the service, about half-past eight o'clock in the evening, all went on quietly, except, indeed, as frequently happened, "the men" had a grudge against some assisting minister, in which case no amount of singing and addressing could secure him above a handful of communicants at his table—while the next, if served by a person who had the good opinion of the self-same "men," would be positively crammed!! The number of the table services seldom exceeded three or four, as not a tithe of the congregation ever dreamt of communicating. Last of all came the concluding address, in which it was no rare thing to find announcements of the preacher being then under a miraculous prophetic impulse, as well as specific predictions, as if by inspiration, of such absolute certainties, as that one or two individuals of the assembled thousands should die in the course of the subsequent year —care being taken that the prophet should not be committed to a name!! The people dispersed, but not to retire to their own homes for the night, but to take a little (occasionally, in truth, *not* a little) refreshment, before repairing to a meeting presided over by "the men," in which the proceedings of the day were discussed, till long past midnight; the style of criticism, in the case of every minister who was not mean enough to become their creature, bearing a great resemblance to that which I noticed in my last letter as having been exhibited at Thurso! Such, Sir, was the procedure in ordinary of a Latheron communion Sabbath, during the period to which Sir George Sinclair professes to look back with unmingled delight, while the altered circumstances of the present day fill him with sorrow. It is right I should add, that more extraordinary incidents were not unfrequent; when, for example, there was a regular fight at the door of the pot-house; or when an un-

happy young woman dared to raise an umbrella as a protection from the showers which fell during the preaching, in which case she was singled out for rebuke, and was condemned to listen to bitter invectives against her "roving eye," "fine ribbons," and "devil's screen," by which last phrase the offending umbrella was euphemistically described. These were the doings of those "former and happier days" to which our Baronet so lugubriously refers. Let me presume to hang on each side of his finished picture of a Thurso communion in 1849, my rough sketches of an English communion in that parish, and a Gaelic one in Latheron, ere there was any word of the Free Secession.

I must not, however, neglect to direct attention to what, before 1843, was the great day of a Northern communion —the day in which the interest of five-sixths of the Gaelic population was concentrated, and without which a Highland sacrament would have appeared to the people as "cheerless," as Sir George declares (page 37) the "solitude" of the parish church of Thurso now is to him. Your Southern readers may be surprised when I refer to such a day, after having already spoken of the exercises of the communion Sabbath, for they are likely enough to entertain the idea that wherever the Lord's Supper is observed, the day of its observance must be regarded as more important than any of those week days on which it is customary to have public religious services at the season of the dispensation of the sacrament. This will not be the notion of a person acquainted with the "position" of the Church in "the Northern counties," at the period of which Sir George "cherishes too fond a remembrance," the period which preceded the recent secession of "ninety-nine in a hundred of the most pious and respectable of the rural tenantry," of the "grey-headed patriarchs, good men and full of faith," and of "the attentive and crowded auditors" whose absence from their parish church fills our woful Baronet with "sorrow and discouragement." A man thoroughly informed as to the ecclesiastical condition of the North,

in the palmy times which are gone, will have no hesitation in admitting that the grand day of a communion week in a Highland parish was neither the Sabbath, nor the Fast-day, nor the Saturday, nor the Monday, but the day of "the men," the Friday. And I know few things so well calculated to enable a Lowlander to understand the true state of the Church in the "Northern counties," during the "Ten Years' Conflict," and the preceding half-century, as a short and simple detail of the incidents of a Communion Friday in the parish of Latheron, to which, as I have hinted, the people of most of the other Gaelic parishes looked, as, in respect of Sacramental proceedings, the model of all that was good.

Permit me, then, to describe to you the scene on the hill of Latheron, at the noon of the Friday preceding the Summer Communion, in any year from 1825 to 1833. There is an assembly of some thousands of Highlanders seated in front of the large wooden erection, which is called the preaching tent. You remark, in the distance, travelling towards the place of meeting, three ministers, who are engaged in earnest conversation. If you were to join their party, and to be admitted to their secrets, you would hear one, whom we shall name A, say to another, whom we shall style B,—"Now, as you are to preside to-day, I hope you will make a point of not asking X (as we shall denominate him) to speak, for he has not been in any church since the last Communion which he attended, and that is about six months ago; I know he is to be at the meeting this forenoon, in order that he may have an opportunity of denouncing myself and my neighbour, as he did this time last year." "Well, as to him," you would find the neighbour, whom we shall designate C, exclaim, "I don't mind so much, because I believe him to be a pious man upon the whole, though he never goes to church; but another man (we shall call him Y) is to be there, whom I trust you will not think of inviting, as he is getting quite notorious for love to the bottle, and our

Session had almost been compelled to inquire into his character, in consequence of some dreadful stories that were abroad as to his licentious conduct; but we contrived to avoid pushing on the investigation, as we knew that all the pious people had such a warm regard for him, that our taking up the case would have been almost universally ascribed to a desire of exposing the failings of the saints." "Ah," Mr. B. would reply, "don't speak in that way, or I shall have no *leeberty* at the meeting; they are both men of great experience, and are of such tender consciences that, though they regularly appear at all the communion times, they have not gone to the table for several years; we have no communicants who can equal them in utterance, and, if I preside, I cannot but call upon them, so one of you had better take my place." "No, no," A and C would instantaneously respond, "you must have your usual post, the people all expect it, and now that we have told you our opinions, you must act for yourself." The conversation having ceased as the speakers approached the tent, you would see them enter, and B would commence the services with a few verses of a psalm, and a prayer in which there were many marked petitions that there might be great *leeberty* that day, and that no one might be prevented by the fear of man from speaking what he felt. At the conclusion of the prayer, he would address a few sentences to the congregated multitudes, and would beg that if any of them had any case of conscience which he would like resolved, it should now be stated to the meeting, when some brother would endeavour to remove his difficulty. This request would bring up a person of very sombre aspect, in a distant part of the crowd, who would say that he had been much troubled to discover the marks of grace. The presiding minister, our friend B, would highly commend this "question," would express his persuasion that there were only two or three there that ought to venture to "speak to it," and would call upon a man sitting in front of the tent to give his

opinion. He, instead of rising, would hide his face in his hands, and bow down his head towards the ground, exhibiting increased symptoms of unwillingness tospeak, at each repetition of the request that he would let them have his mind. At length, he would be abandoned to silence, and the same process, with the same result, would be gone through in the cases of two or three others. "Ah, my dear freends," B would exclaim, "see how humble some poor creatures are when asked to speak at a meeting; there is many a carnal professor would give me half-a-crown if I would ask him!" It would seem to you as if there was to be no lay oratory, but you would soon discover the contrary. B would look towards a person in the costume of "the men," and would beg of your acquaintance X to give the people his mind. Amidst the breathless silence and intense anxiety of the multitude, he would rise and declare that a word had been sent to him which he could not but speak, and it was, that whatever might be the marks of grace, none were to be found "in those big parish ministers (B was not a parish minister, but A and C were) who fed themselves and not the flock—those idol shepherds into whose flock the true sheep would not enter (he himself held a meeting in opposition to his parish minister, during the hours of public worship, every Sabbath, and many of his hearers were now around him,) those carnal worldlings, who, unlike the Apostles, wore boots (deep groans from the old women,) and travelled in gigs!" (expressions of horror in every part of the meeting, all eyes being directed towards the tent in which A and C were seated.) "The pious patriarch" would harp upon this string for a goodly time, and sweet would be his sounds to the audience, but to none more than to his friend B, betwixt whom and him there was a complete understanding. As soon as he had finished, B would invite Y to speak to the question, and you would see before you another of "the men," with a countenance in which sensuality and fanaticism had alike imprinted

their broadest marks. He would begin by pointing to B, (with whom he was exceedingly intimate,) and protesting that but "for Jehoshaphat they should not have seen his face that day." "As for the marks of grace," he would say, "many ministers nowadays did not know what grace was—it was all dry, hard, morality with them, and they would cast out, if they could, a true child of God, and lay false accusations at his door, because he was a witness against their legal preaching." "O ye devils," he would shout at the full pitch of his voice, "ye cannot make me silent, I will lift a testimony against you in this meeting, and will warn the simple lest they fall into your snares." Loud and long was the declamation which followed; and when it was concluded, B would sum up what had been spoken in a lengthened address, which was much more gratifying to "the men" than the ministers; and after prayers had been offered up by various persons in the congregation, who did not fail to drive home the nails entered by X and Y, the multitude dispersed, animated by a joy to which A and C alone were strangers, and resolved that their conduct on the subsequent days of the communion season would make "the big parish ministers" feel how feeble a hold they had on the great mass of their parishioners.*

I challenge Sir G. Sinclair and all his Free allies to disprove this most marvellous story, every item of which I am able to substantiate. The scene I have depicted was of very frequent occurrence in Latheron, and it was closely resembled by what might often be seen in Halkirk, Reay, Tongue, Farr, and many other parishes in our Baronet's immediate neighbourhood. His pamphlet is intended to convey the impression that the Church was flourishing throughout the district in which he resides up till 1843, "including," as it did (page 3,) "the individuals most distinguished by ardent zeal and enlightened piety!!" whereas

* A, B, and C all seceded in 1843.

it has since that period become a desolate and deserted ruin. I think I have shown that, long before the recent Secession, the inhabitants of that region were in such an ecclesiastical, intellectual, and moral condition, that their extensive desertion of our National Church, though deeply to be regretted on their own account, as well as on account of the credit of our common country, does not afford any unfavourable indication of the principles which our Church holds, nor of the character of the ministers by whom her services are maintained.

But I must again pause for the day, and subscribe myself —Yours, very obediently,

INVESTIGATOR.

8th April, 1850.

No. V.

SIR,—The actor who should endeavour to perform our immortal dramatist's tragedy of Hamlet without bringing the hero himself on the stage—the genealogist who should concoct a tree of Sir George Sinclair's ancestry, and omit to assign a prominent place to his precursor, Harpsdale, whose characteristic features he so strikingly displays—the reviewer who should undertake the tedious task of criticising our Baronet's pamphlet, and profess that he had discharged his duty, while he had abstained from noticing the egotistical, tuft-hunting, discontented, and money-loving spirit by which its pages are animated—none of these persons would follow a more absurd and unwarrantable course than the man who should set himself to explain the social, moral, and ecclesiastical condition of the inhabitants of the Northern counties, and cast into the shade, or but dimly shadow forth, the influence of "the men." To the circumstances which led to the domination of "these pious patriarchs," and to the manner in which their despotism has been maintained, are to be mainly ascribed all those extraordinary phenomena in the aspect

both of the people and of their ministers which are amply sufficient to account for whatever is true in Sir George's exaggerated representations of the "emptiness" (page 37) of the parish churches in his vicinity, as well as to furnish us with the *rationale* of the fact to which he gives "candid evidence," that now that "ninety-nine in a hundred of the most pious and respectable rural tenantry flock to the Free places of worship," the morals of his district are becoming more and more depraved!! Let me, therefore, offer a few additional remarks upon the rise and progress, and "position and prospects," of these (page 11) "most zealous and pious members" of Sir George's "Christian community."

"The men," I believe, are indebted for the commencement of their dynasty to that deficiency of pastoral superintendence which, till a very recent date, was universally admitted to exist in the Highlands,—to the long-continued dearness of the Gaelic Bible, and to the ignorance of the uneducated Highlanders. It was but little instruction that the minister of a Northern parish could supply to his parishioners, when they were living at a distance of 10 or 12 miles from his church, and were scattered over a tract of country which, in the south, would have comprehended the greater part of a whole Presbytery. Hence arose the demand for catechists, to supplement, as it was pretended, the acknowledged lack of spiritual guides to the people. Persons were appointed to this office, and were commissioned to hold meetings for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures in those hamlets which were so far removed from the parish church as to render it impossible for their inhabitants to wait upon the services of the sanctuary. The book which was handed to these individuals as the Bible was not the Gaelic but the English version; the former work being much more expensive than the latter, and Highlanders in the humbler ranks of life being unable to read in their native language. I have no wish to be unnecessarily severe in my strictures upon this system; but

I cannot help saying that my investigations have convinced me that it was the source of manifold evils to those among whom it prevailed. The catechists speedily discovered that their readings were vastly more relished by the imaginative and superstitious Celts when a few grains of enthusiasm and extravagance were added to what seemed to them the cold and constrained "letter of the Word." Accordingly, in translating from the English version which they held in their hands, they gradually deviated farther and farther from the literal meaning of the scriptural expressions, till at length they might be said to "teach for doctrines the commandments of men;" since, instead of giving the Gaelic equivalents to the terms in the English Bible, they read out to their hearers, as the Word of the Lord, what was the concoction of their own wild and wayward fancy. In thus acting, they were safe from detection by the people, for they could not read for themselves, and knew nothing of the Scriptures except what they learned from their catechists. The transition was easy from reading and praying to expounding in public, and it was unscrupulously made. The catechists became lay preachers, and had regular meetings for the display of their oratorical powers, at the ordinary hours for Divine service. Abandoning all those restraints which information and intelligence impose upon educated expounders of Scripture, they indulged in fantastic declamation, which charmed the semi-savage peasantry of the north, and made them crowd to their meetings, instead of attending at the parish churches. The consequences were what might have been anticipated. The catechists increased in number and importance. Some assumed the office from a regard to the respect and renown, and even reverence, with which its possessors were rewarded by the people. Others took it up with a view to the temporal profit which it secured, in the shape of gifts of various kinds. Not a few became catechists that they might escape being craftsmen. And cases were of frequent occurrence, in which there could be

no doubt that the motive was the same with that which prompts licentious hypocrites to go forth after their prey, clad in a long and closely-drawn cloak of seeming sanctity.

The ministers were alarmed by all this, and offered some show of resistance. They were instantly calumniated sometimes as (page 18) "heterodox, careless, or ungodly;" and at other times, as (page 30) "the scorn of the people and the scandal of the Church, mere stipendiary magistrates, intent on" their "stipends, and indifferent to the salvation of souls." Amongst others who suffered from this treatment, for many a long year, were—"the late worthy minister of Reay," (page 19) who was persecuted to death by a catechist and his adherents, with whom Sir George professed to have at least as much sympathy as with their aged victim; another, who is described (page 12) as "*one* of the most venerable and influential pastors of the Free Church in Caithness," whose gig and top-boots were the themes of many a furious invective by "the most pious and devoted Christians," of whom we read in page 19; the late Mr. Hugh M'Kenzie of Tongue, who, after his health had been ruined by a lifetime of unrelenting calumnies from the same parties, was at length slanderously reported as a martyr in the Sutherland campaign for sites; and, not to multiply instances, when I might specify every Gaelic minister in the northern counties, with the exception of two or three,—a well-known Free minister in Easter Ross, who was wont to show fight, in a celebrated sermon upon hypocrisy, in which, after detailing the characteristics of 21 different kinds of hypocrites, he indicated plainly enough that 18 of the varieties were combined in the person of a hostile lay preacher in his village! The two or three ministers whom I have mentioned as exempt from the otherwise universal abuse of the catechists were their mere creatures, and were rewarded for abject prostration in the dust at their feet by being declared to be as much superior to all the pastors, as Sir George is now said by his Free admirers to be to all the people, of the

Church! Many of "the men" who thus tyrannised over the ministers were characterised by a "piety," of which Southern moralists have no idea; they were (to quote a description of them which was current some thirteen years ago in Inverness and its vicinity, and which was ascribed to the clerical wit to whom I have referred,) "men who ruled all the ministers, and of whom all the ministers were afraid; men who were notorious liars, having been detected often in lies, and malicious liars; persons who told lies to set people by the ears, and yet pious men after all!!" Delicacy forbids me to soil your columns with anything more than a passing allusion to their besetting sin of impurity, in which many of them were known to wallow, and for which some, without any perceptible diminution of their popularity, beyond a few years, were subjected to the discipline of the Church * by ministers whom they did not fail to brand as Arians or Arminians (page 19,) or latitudinarians (page 23,) or Moderates (page 12;) which last term of reproach being "certainly not recommended to the pious patriarchs" of the North "by any hallowed or endearing reminiscences," has, since 1843, been transferred by them from those ministers of a former day who ventured to expose and rebuke their licentiousness, to the whole of the clergy of the Church of Scotland, in whom they feel that, while they indulge in their darling vices, they cannot expect to have friends!!

Now, Sir, I am thoroughly satisfied that the influence of "the men" whom I have thus brought under your notice has done more than all other things to stereotype the character of our northern population. They, in the period which preceded the late Secession, encouraged the people to abstain from the communion, and to be very irregular in their attendance at their parish churches, because they saw that such a course would

* I have collected the materials for a detailed statement of these cases, if what I have said should be denied.

render their own usurped authority more secure. They were the leaders in such disgraceful scenes on sacramental occasions, as were exhibited in my last letter--scenes which were admirably fitted to exalt them, in the estimation of the ignorant, far above the parochial ministers. They dictated to their clerical instructors! those wild and irrational harangues of which their sermons and other addresses, especially at communion seasons, were composed. They led "the overwhelming majority of the population" (page 10) to desert the National Church, and to join the Free Secession. They are, at this moment, retaining the people in such blind bigotry, and foolish fanaticism, that (page 13) "many, if not most of the members of the Free Church in the rural districts would rather be satisfied (with what they always preferred to any rational and scriptural discourse) with the prayers and readings of an elder or a catechist, and studying the Scriptures (in the light cast upon them by "the men") at their own houses, than place themselves under the superintendence of ministers," whose "piety and respectability (page 10) they do not question," and who, notwithstanding what Sir George Sinclair considers their terrible offence—that of asking for augmentations, do, in the estimation of their augmentation-loathing adversary, the present holder of the Ulbster teinds (page 12,) "preach the doctrines of the gospel in strict conformity with the standards of the Church," to which standards "the men" and their dupes profess to adhere!! Nay, Sir, it is to "the men," to these "pious patriarchs," to their Antinomian teaching, and still more to their corrupting example, in a much greater degree than to the new poor law, that I trace the appalling fact of which Sir G. Sinclair gives "candid evidence," that in the Free but "men"-ridden community in which he dwells, "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought, are universally admitted to be on the increase!" Our Baronet's beloved Voluntaryism (page 32) makes it impossible for the Fre

ministers to offer a successful resistance to their evil opinions and practices, and hence, as he tells us, the morals of the people in his neighbourhood are becoming worse and worse.

But it may be said that I am not warranted by fact when I assert that "the men" have brought the inhabitants of the northern counties to that lamentable condition which I have described, inasmuch as their influence is almost entirely confined to the Gaelic population, while many of the people of Caithness are exclusively English. My reply is very short and simple. It is not true that the evil star of "the men" produces but little effect on those parishes of the north where English is the language in universal use. I have already hinted that there were various considerations which led the Highlanders to aspire after a place in the all-powerful body to which I have referred. No one who has any acquaintance with human nature can be surprised to learn that these considerations had equal force with many of the English-speaking people, and that they longed to be enrolled among "the men."*

* It will be seen from what our Baronet has been so obliging as to record in that valuable addition to his "lucubrations," on which I have commented in a note to my 3d letter, that he himself was an aspirant after this dignity. But his "palpable inferiority," in "fluency, unction, and simplicity," to the other candidates, was more "deeply felt" by the "meeting" than by himself, and so, poor fellow! the honours of the spotted cotton pocket handkerchief and camlet cloak were denied to him!! He made another desperate effort to attain to them, one Sabbath of last winter, and convened an assembly in "Thurso Castle," during the hours of Divine service. The thing, however, was an entire failure, there being none in attendance except a few old wives from those "fisher biggings" whose architecture is in such admirable keeping with the Baronial residence. Sir George has no more chance of being one of "the men," than his friend William the Fourth told him he had of being "a Minister of State!"—except, indeed, he should follow the example of a Free Dignitary, who was stationed in a parish in the South, and who, after he found that upon his Secession, in 1843, the whole population attached themselves to his able and eloquent successor, secured an audience for a few Sundays by supplying bread and beer to all who would reconcile themselves to (page 16) "his dry and unedifying sermon!" The Free people of the North are, both intellectually and morally, so far below the "Residuaries" of the South, that I am persuaded a copious distribution of bread and beer would insure a congregation in

To attain this object they laboured, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, during a lengthened period, of which "the ten years' conflict" formed a portion. The hour of the Church's greatest difficulties was that of their signal triumph. In the confusion and turmoil which preceded the Secession, they managed so well for their own interests, that each English parish was brought to acknowledge one or more of its inhabitants as representing "the men." I have before me the names of individuals, whose residences were in Watten, Olrig, Wick, and Canisby, and who were "the men" of a large proportion of the inhabitants of these English parishes. I must not detain you with anecdotes in proof of their recognition by the mass of the people. If the fact be denied, when this statement gets abroad, the evidences of its truth will soon be in your possession. In the meantime, I content myself with adducing the testimony of a Free minister, who was a native of Caithness, but left it, for a mission in the south, upwards of 20 years ago. Happening to revisit the scene of his early life, during "the ten years' conflict," he was asked by a friend who had a favourable idea of his powers of observation, whether he remarked any change in the religious aspect of the people since he had ceased to live among them? His answer was, "The Latheron religion (that of 'the men') has got down into the low country, and is making rapid progress in the English districts of the county!!" Such was his impartial and unbiassed statement; and I could support it by several columns of stern and stubborn facts. I appeal to this Free minister as a witness above all suspicion in the case at issue, and maintain that the influence of "the men" had extended to the English parishes of Caithness before 1843,—that they were the parties who carried out the

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Thurso, even to a person whose "ministrations, (page 8,) from age or *other* circumstances, are altogether valueless." But it would not do, in the Free Dignitary's locality, so he was elevated to "*otium cum dignitate*" in Edinburgh.

extraordinary plans and purposes which were exhibited at the Thurso communion of 1833,—that they induced the English-speaking population of their county to go over, in great numbers, to the Free Secession,—that they are restraining the peasantry from returning to the Church of their fathers,—and that in the English as well as in the Gaelic parishes of Caithness, their mode of teaching and living, and their lordly domination over the ministers whom they know to be dependent upon them for "sustentation," have been mainly instrumental in reducing the morality of their neighbourhood to so low a level that, Sir George Sinclair says, "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought, are universally admitted to be on the increase."

What, then, can be done for those large and populous districts whose wretched state I have endeavoured to expose? With more than Harpsdalian sapience, and without ne particle of "his venerable grandmother, Lady Janet's" common sense, our Baronet suggests (page 31) either that "the Establishment should petition for an Act of Parliament and relinquish its sway over the Northern counties, and resign to the Free Church the temporalities and responsibilities as soon as the present incumbents shall have been removed;" or, that the General Assembly of the Establishment should enter upon a negotiation with that of the Free Church, and the Synods of all other Presbyterian denominations, for the purpose of devising such a general constitution for the entire body as may enable them hereafter to love and co-operate as brethren;" or, that "a portion of the stipends might be awarded to the ministers of the other Presbyterian denominations, in parishes where the adherents of the Establishment form a mere fraction of the population!!" Really, the green horse was as nothing to these suggestions! If the Baronet had the slightest anticipation of making them when he wrote his first letter, he might have saved himself the trouble of stating (page 4) that he begged "to be understood as

possessing no personal knowledge, and very little acquired information, as to the relative state of parties in the south, east, and west of Scotland;" for what he has suggested must satisfy every person of ordinary intelligence that he is either grossly ignorant of the subject on which he writes, or is prosecuting some selfish or sinister end, and hopes to be able to accomplish it by deceiving others. His first scheme is simple enough—that the Church should voluntarily surrender her position as a missionary body, and should quietly permit the entire population of the Northern counties to remain in that slough of ignorance, fanaticism, and immorality, into which it has been cast by "the men," who are the "pious patriarchs" of the Free Secession in the North, and who have given its tone to that community among which "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought, are universally admitted to be on the increase!" His second scheme is not so clear to my mind, involving as it does that the ministers of the Church should hold a friendly conference and establish a close alliance with parties who (page 38) will "have nothing in common with them, so far as spiritual intercourse is concerned," "on account of the dislike and distrust with which they view the Establishment, and the ministers who have adhered to it." I wish Sir George would come forth once more from (page 7) "his sad and sorrowful seclusion," where (page 4) he "only sees regularly one Scottish newspaper," and "obtrude upon general notice some further lucubrations upon this subject" (page 6;) for his experience in the art of endeavouring to harmonise things which are essentially opposite is more extensive by far than that of any other person with whose history I am in any degree acquainted. As for his third scheme, I can detect an objection to it, which he will doubtless consider altogether insignificant and trivial—viz., that it could not be acceded to, except at a sacrifice of every vestige of principle, by the Free Seceders and other Presbyterian Dissenters. I cannot enter into his

sentiments as expressed in page 16, where he declares that he has "long wished that the word Dissenter could be erased from our ecclesiastical vocabulary, as it certainly (just like 'Protestant') carries along with it an imputation of error or unsoundness!" irrespective, of course, of the nature of the thing dissented from!! But, if the Presbyterian Dissenters of Scotland, after their professions of resolute Voluntaryism, and solemn attestations that they could not, without doing violence to their conscientious convictions, receive the pay of the State, were to be enticed by "the syren" (page 40) of Ulbster, instead of "leaving" her, as I am confident they will all do, "to warble unheeded;" if they were to be persuaded by Sir George "to enjoy" what he tells us they regard as "the flesh-pots of Egypt," to "be fed and feasted with" what he assures us they consider "the quails of a State provision," then they would well deserve to be regarded with that "repugnance" which (page 16) our Baronet was so uncharitable as to feel towards them, in his "early life," and "for a long time" after it was over; and we might well spare the Latin word "Dissenter," (of which no man need be ashamed in the sense in which it is at present used) since, if the Dissenters would follow Sir George's advice, it would have a synonyme in the Saxon—"*knave!!*" And, as to the Free Seceders consenting to receive "a portion of the stipends" which they protest to us they have gladly renounced, *in toto*, for conscience sake, all that your neighbour, Mr. Macbeth of Free Laurieston, and others have said of their conduct in refusing to "send back the money" of the American "slaveholders and menstealers," and all that I myself have seen of their efforts to retain possession of the *quoad sacra* churches, after having professed to surrender the whole of the property of that national establishment to which these churches were inseparably bound by the strictest legal deeds—all this will not tempt me to imagine that they would commit *felo de se*, in the way which Sir George has

been so generous as to prescribe for their adoption. Very sure am I that there is many a minister in the Free Secession, who if "a devoted and disinterested," but withal most weak and twattling, "minister" of our Church were to go to him, and employ what our Baronet (pages 29, 30) recommends should be his language,—"The stipend is allocated for the instruction of the parishioners in the principles of Christian truth, and I cannot think of monopolising the entire sum, while I have only twenty or thirty souls to superintend, whilst you, my brother, bear the burden and heat of the day; let me, therefore, relieve my own conscience, and *pro tanto* exonerate the people from the expense of maintaining a pastor for themselves, by prevailing on you to accept one-half or one-third of the stipend, when so much larger a proportion of the toil and responsibility devolves upon you!"—very sure am I that many an honest (though, as I think, mistaken) Free minister would reply to the creature who could be silly enough to make such a proposal,—"Thy money perish with thee; would'st thou relieve thy conscience by burdening mine? If I could conscientiously receive the moiety of Erastian money which thou offerest, what should hinder me from returning to the Establishment, and endeavouring to secure a whole stipend to myself?" But this is one of the three "nostrums," (page 7) or "specifics," or "panaceas,"* (page 5)

* The instant my eye fell upon these terms, I said to myself—Why, this smells of the shop. The impression was increased by what I read, in page 10, of "medical knowledge," and "the happiness of relieving many in sickness." But I have been more than surprised by the tidings which I have received of the extent of our Baronet's medical practice. He ranges over the whole domain of bodily suffering, and (will no kind friend hint to Dr. Locock and Dr. J. Y. Simpson—look to your laurels, ere it be too late?) is quite an adept! Let me beg, as a personal favour, that while he is under the exhilarating influence of the elixir which I have served out to him in these letters, he will furnish the world with a succinct statement of "the extraordinary and unprecedented cures" which, he avers, have been effected by that Holloway-surpassing ointment, which he so delicately applies, "doing (if we are to believe himself) *good*, by stealth," and, I should hope, "*blushing* to find it fame."

which our Baronet would provide for the long-continued and deadly sickness, of a moral kind, under which his northern neighbours suffer!!

A friend has told me that he has recently read, in some newspaper, a letter from "the secluded country gentleman," in which he complains, most piteously, that one of the Free ministers of Caithness would not spend a night in his house, though he offered him a specific for ophthalmia, when his eyes happened to be sore. Really, I cannot wonder that the rev. gentleman should have declined to submit to the quack occulist, nor do I think that he can have sustained much loss by the declinature. But whatever may have been the extravagance of the medical or surgical quackery, I am sure it cannot have surpassed, in absurdity, the quackery of a different kind displayed in this pamphlet. It has forcibly reminded me of Sir Walter Scott's well-known allusion to our Baronet's father, of whom he thinks it worth while to inform us (page 16) that he "does not remember to have ever seen a Dissenting minister at his table!!" After the liberty which Sir George has taken (page 39) with Horace, in substituting (doubtless from a fear that the true version would scandalise the prudish blue-stockings whom he expected to laud his "lucubrations,") "*priscus amor redit*" for "*prisca redit Venus*," he must pardon my slight change on Sir Walter's lines, which I transmute into

> "Step out, Sir George, of projects rife,
> And win the fame of an auld wife."

With this most apt quotation I close my remarks for the day, and defer, till my next letter, which will conclude the series, the adoption of a more serious strain.—I remain, Sir, yours very obediently,

15th April, 1850. INVESTIGATOR.

No. VI.

Sir,—I feel assured that I have the cordial assent of all your readers when I affirm that there is just one grand remedy for "the malignant disorder" (page 9) which Sir George Sinclair declares "to be on the increase" among our countrymen in the north—just one process by which "the position and prospects" alike of the Church and of the people, in those counties of which the Baronet speaks, may be improved. "Educate, educate, educate," should be the motto of every philanthropist who endeavours to raise the northern Highlanders from the degradation into which they have fallen, and to secure respectably-sized congregations for our parochial ministers. To borrow the expressive simile in which Sir George's accomplished friend, whom the Brodick Frees wished to secure for the edification of their "Ducal" neighbours, and "learned and curious visitors," set forth to his admiring audience in Inverness, the impossibility of "a Moderate entering into heaven,"—"It wad be as aisy for a coo to gang up a tree backward, or tail foremost, as for" the destructive influence of "the men" to be maintained in an educated community. I am not more thoroughly satisfied that the monstrous absurdities of Hindooism must be rejected by our fellow-subjects in India, as soon as the seminaries which our Church had the honour to establish there have begun to tell upon the mass of the population, than I am that the debasing usurpation of "the men," which is the main-spring of all the evil that prevails in the north, must yield to the progress of information and intelligence through our Assembly schools. Full well do these "pious patriarchs" themselves perceive this, and hence the tirades against "head knowledge" in which they and their ministerial toadeaters indulge. The one bright speck in the gloomy horizon of the northern districts indicates our well-filled schools, where, without making so much as a single sectarian or controversial allusion, our teachers are gradually, but surely, depriving "the men" of their pestiferous

influence, by the simple process of communicating to the young the elements of a good education. I am convinced that this beneficial operation has been grievously retarded by the secession of 1843, since that (to the Highlands especially,) most calamitous occurrence has led to the establishment of many new schools, in which the urgencies of the "sustentation fund" render "the men" predominant. But if our Church will only persevere in her educational efforts, and prosecute them with increasing energy and zeal, in the northern counties, I have no fear of the next generation, however small may be my expectations from the present one; for it is my persuasion that the hated "head knowledge" will do to "the men" of the north what it has done to hobgoblins* in the south—render them objects of utter contempt to all persons whose mental calibre is in any degree superior to that of Harpsdale, or his fac-simile—Sir George Sinclair. And with the fall of the authors of the present state of affairs in the Highlands, that state itself will cease, and our countrymen in the benighted regions beyond the Ness will become, ecclesiastically, morally, and socially, such as we now find the inhabitants of those more enlightened districts of which Sir George is pleased to declare (page 4) that he has "no doubt" that in them "able and efficient ministers, connected with the Establishment, preside over numerous and attached congregations;" instead of remaining, as he assures us the Norlanders now are, subject to (page 48) the "undisputed and permanent ascendancy" of "the Free Church," beneath whose genial sceptre (page 6) "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought, are universally admitted to be on the increase!!"

My hope, Sir, for the Highlands, rests, under God, on the Church's schools. But I am far from undervaluing the results, whether for good or for evil, which may flow from the life and doctrine of the parochial clergy. If my

* Does Sir George know anything of "an able man," who was once a "leading M.P.," and yet durst not sleep in a dark room?

voice could reach those ministers who have been admitted to the charges which were vacated by the northern Seceders in 1843, I would entreat them to remember that the positions which they occupy are contemplated with the deepest interest by every leal-hearted Scottish Churchman. It is only a person like the Ulbster Baronet, whose selfish and pecuniary motives are as transparent as his want of judgment and good feeling, that will taunt them with their "empty churches" and "scanty adherents," while they are, as he attests is at present the case, men of (page 10) "respectability and piety." But if their character were to undergo a change, they would find themselves quite as strongly reprobated by all true friends of the Church and the people of Scotland, as they are by Sir George Sinclair. I am well aware that their *southern* brethren know little of the trials to which they are exposed. The difficulties of their stations cannot, however, excuse anything like indolence or imprudence, to say nothing of grosser deviations from clerical decorum. I distrust Sir George's indiscriminate praise of their whole body, associated as it is with equally indiscriminate abuse. It would be a miracle if some of them were not liable to censure, though I rejoice to think that a large proportion of them deserve our cordial praise. But I implore the faithful majority to deal firmly with those who may be of a different character. I know that, before 1843, it was no rare thing to see Highland ministers treating their heritors in a harsh and uncourteous manner. If such conduct be still persisted in, the offending brethren should be made to feel that they are bringing discredit and disaster on the Church to which they belong. It is many years since the scandal of farming ministers originated in the Highlands.* There ought not to be any scruple in subjecting to discipline every individual who may

* This act of gross impropriety was not confined to the Northern counties. I could name a Minister, to the south of Inverness, who was a Factor!! He is now in the Free Secession.

presume upon this violation of his ordination vows. And if we have now, as we had in former days, among our Highland ministers, lazy drones, who will not exert themselves in preaching, catechising, and visiting,—men destitute of all missionary spirit, who deliberately disobey the Act of Assembly which enjoins regular collections, on stated Sabbaths, for the schemes,—persons unsound in doctrine or immoral in life,—I earnestly trust that no undue lenity or delicacy will prevent their co-presbyters from visiting them with condign punishment. Never, I confidently affirm, was there less disposition in the Church, than at this moment, to shrink from the exposure and condemnation of unworthy ministers. In direct opposition to what is stated by Sir George Sinclair (page 8,) I assert that "the Church" has "provided an adequate remedy for cases" such as I have supposed; and the tone and temper of recent Assemblies give us good grounds for anticipating that on every seasonable occasion, it will henceforth be firmly and faithfully applied.

The remarks which I have hitherto made on the pamphlet before me have been almost exclusively directed to what is contained in the six letters of which it chiefly consists. But I must not forget that there is a "Postscript" of no fewer than six pages, and that it is even more reprehensible than the previous "lucubrations." The contrast between many of the statements in it and those in the first letter would have amused me, if I had not discovered that there are scarcely two consecutive pages in the whole pamphlet which do not point-blank contradict each other. "The secluded country gentleman" must have been under the guidance of his evil genius when he penned the "lucubrations" for which he is now to be brought to book.

There is nothing novel in the art by which the postscript is saturated with venom. The process is almost identical with that which we not unfrequently find exhibited in the newspaper reports of Old Bailey evidence. A witness, in that court, if an adept at his trade, is never

more successful in making out his case than when he professes that he for a long time did not know of this and that thing, with which he afterwards came to be quite familiar. Just so, Sir George (page 53) says, "There are several important elements in the past history and present position of the Establishment, with respect to which I was, until lately, very imperfectly informed," and then he enters on a lengthened narrative of what he has "only learned at a very recent period," or (page 57) "within these few days." By this ingenious device, or, as they say at the Old Bailey, "artful dodge," our Baronet is able to escape all the inconvenient restraint which might have been imposed upon him by his previously recorded praise of the Church (page 51,) as "an Establishment which has done so much good, and may yet, in God's providence, be intended for further usefulness," and to represent her as without missionaries! a persecutor of the English Presbyterians! the subject of "loud complaints," "even in the great towns," for "exorbitant cost and limited usefulness," and having, by her procedure in regard to the *quoad sacra* churches, brought upon herself the fearful judgment—"for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep!" I must have a few words as to each of these calumnies.

The first charge is put with all the skill of an old practitioner. It is broadly asserted that all our Church's missionaries seceded, and were deprived of the property of the mission, and the subject is dismissed forthwith, not a hint being dropped that other missionaries were appointed in their room, that the property was transferred to them, and that the work is prosecuted with greater zeal and more marked success than before the Secession! Let me commend to the careful study of all Old Bailey expectants this finished specimen of *suppressio veri*.

Calumny No. 1, is positively surpasssed by No. 2. We have here the Church of Scotland falsely accused

of ejecting the Presbyterian congregations in England from their chapels, while the fact is simply this, that one portion of the members of some of these congregations has legally and equitably succeeded in retaining possession of its places of worship, in terms of the original title deeds; and the other portion, which had illegally and unjustly endeavoured to alienate the property from the purposes to which it was astricted by law, has been checked in a career of spoliation and dishonesty. That the defeated party has loudly complained of robbery, is merely an illustration of the proverb as to the character of the person who first cries—"Stop thief!" *

With respect to calumny No. 3, I content myself with stating that "the loud complaints" which Sir George insinuates have been recently uttered as to "the exorbitant cost and limited usefulness" of the Church, "even in the large towns," are of a much older date than the origin of the Free Secession. They were made, times without number, during the Voluntary controversy in 1832-8, and were directed, in no small measure, against several of the most influential ministers who subsequently seceded from the Church, whose success in the pulpit was by no means commensurate with their platform fame. I don't deny that we have still, as we had formerly, some very thinly attended places of worship in our "large towns;" but I appeal to every man who knows anything of the ecclesiastical condition of these towns, whether it be not the fact, that in every case in which the patrons present a good minister to

* Sir George appends to page 60 of his second edition, an extract, from what he styles "an eloquent and excellent address to his congregation, at Manchester, by the Rev. Alexander Munro," and denounces, as "monstrous and unhallowed injustice," the exclusion of the Free Seceders from a Church which was rivetted by the strongest legal deeds to the religious communion which they had abjured. The Vice-Chancellor of England, when pronouncing judgment in the case to which our Baronet refers, stigmatized the proceedings of the objects of his sympathy, as "contrary to justice, plain dealing, and fidelity," and added, that, "to have allowed them to escape would, in his opinion, have been to uphold and sanction fraud, not constructive, but direct and actual fraud." I congratulate Sir George on his allusion to Manchester.

a vacant charge, (and I am glad to say that is now almost universal) his congregation becomes as numerous and influential as if the new sect of 1843 had been unborn. May I not add that, if the Town Councils and other parties entrusted with the patronage of the churches in our towns had acted as honestly in the first year of the Secession as they do at the present period, they would not have had to complain of those diminished revenues which are the results of their own perverse attempts to injure that national institute to whose support they were most solemnly pledged? In spite, however, of all their dishonest deeds, the Church of Scotland is daily increasing in strength, in our large towns, and no one, except a wilful calumniator, will assail her, on the pretence of his believing that *the* contrary is the case.

As to calumny No. 4, I refer Sir George Sinclair to the triumphant defence of the whole procedure of the Church in the matter of the *quoad sacra* churches, contained in Dr. Simpson's reply to the memorial which the Free Seceders presented to Government, but which even their friend the Lord-Advocate confessed to be such as he could not sanction. This postscript abounds in assertions which no intelligent being, who is not labouring (page 56) "under an unhappy obtuseness of moral perception," can fail to perceive to be false. They are as offensive to every rightly constituted mind as the profane burlesque on prayer introduced into page 57. But one fact is worth a whole bushel of arguments, and that fact Sir George himself has adduced, for his own condemnation, in his reference to the case of Lybster Church. I have made myself master of the details of that affair, and I challenge the Baronet and all his fellow-labourers in the work of reviling the Church of Scotland to disprove my statements. That place of worship, I say, was erected by contributions from persons of various denominations and creeds; but the fundamental article of its constitution was that it should be inalienably attached to the National Church estab-

lished by law. The proprietor of the ground on which it was built wished most earnestly to have it placed on another footing, and did all that he could to get a clause introduced into the feu disposition, such as would entitle the majority of the people of the district to alienate it, if they chose, to a different religious community. But the present Free minister of Latheron, in whose parish Lybster was situated, and to whose exertions in raising the new church my informants have borne ample testimony, was afraid that the issue of the introduction of the proprietors' clause would be the transference of the property to the United Secession body, which was making great efforts to collect a congregation in the neighbourhood, and which the proprietor was known to favour. Accordingly, he insisted upon the exclusion of the clause, and, after a strenuous contest, succeeded in having his church bound as closely as the law could bind it to the Established Church of Scotland. I can scarcely be surprised that the writer of this postscript should (page 52) be "quite at a loss to conceive how to reconcile" the Church's "claim to this property with Christian love, or moral fitness, or common sense, or moral propriety!!" But I humbly apprehend that no one who is not under the influence of such an *afflatus* as that under which he writes can have any difficulty in perceiving that "the Established Presbytery" (page 53) of Caithness would have been guilty of a decided dereliction of duty if it had not enforced its right to the Lybster church. Nay, I suspect most persons will be inclined to think that the keys of this edifice ought to have been given up to the Presbytery of the National Church, the instant the minister and managers seceded. I cannot see how the question is affected by Sir George's statement that "no Established minister has been appointed to the cure of souls at Lybster, but the parish minister officiates occasionally to a congregation varying, I am told, from twelve to twenty—the congregation in the parish church at Latheron, as I understand, very rarely

exceeding thirty." Granting all this to be true, it merely proves that Lybster is at present without any minister of the Church of Scotland, just as it was for a considerable time after the new church was erected, while the attendance at Latheron church does not appear to me so very miserable as I should have considered it, if I had not known that before 1843 that church was on ordinary Sabbaths excessively thin, the great mass of the population being attached to "the men." *Ex uno disce omnes.** Such is our Baronet's pet case to illustrate his oft-repeated assertion that (page 55) in the matter of the *quoad sacra* churches "the law has been taken advantage of," by the Church, "at the expense of equity and justice!" He hesitates not to condemn, as inequitable and unjust, the procedure of the Church to prevent the alienation of her property, which was retained for years, and, so far as appearances indicated, would, but for her interference, have been retained for ever, by parties who had not the shadow of a title to it, even for a single day! And he joins with his condemnations of the Church's conduct forms of prayer, which it is his design to impress upon his readers, our ministers can no longer offer! "It does, I own, appear to me," are his words in page 57, "that to wish that fire should come down from heaven to consume them would be, under such circumstances, a far more consistent and appropriate prayer." I reply in his own language, (page 56) "This prayerful tone (affected as it is) seems rather to aggravate than to lessen the moral injustice of the decision!!"

And now, Sir, I conclude these strictures on Sir George

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* I am glad to be able to express my cordial assent to one statement in that virulent Free pamphlet, published at Perth. to which I referred in my preface. "This Lybster case," it says, "may be taken as a specimen, in its main features, of what has occurred throughout the whole of the Chapels" which have been retained or recovered by the Church. Not a doubt of it! But for "the truth of the melancholy proverb—Corporations have no consciences," to which the pamphleteer so apposisely alludes, no one would have dreamt of anything else!!

and his "lucubrations." My copy of his pamphlet is jotted with many marks of reference to passages which present fitting themes for ridicule or censure, but which I have not as yet noticed. The mass of materials for the elucidation of the true state of the northern counties, which I have collected, seems scarcely diminished by what I have transferred to your columns. But I must not make more extensive demands on your space, and on the indulgence of your readers. "Under protestation," as the lawyers write, "to add and eke," in the event of my statements being questioned, I wind up what I have to say with a few remarks on two points as to which I am anxious not to be misunderstood.

Nothing is further from my intention than to accuse the whole of our Free friends of any sympathy, either with Sir G. Sinclair, or with his "pious patriarchs," among whom "idleness, drunkenness, and want of forethought are universally admitted to be on the increase." I am thoroughly satisfied that a very large proportion of the Free Seceders have not the faintest idea of the condition of the north, and that the discoveries which I have made would have been quite as shocking to them as to me, if they had happened upon them while travelling along the line which I have been called to pursue. Let me assure all such persons that I earnestly beg that I may be regarded as deeply regretting that any syllable of mine should occasion them offence or pain. In speaking of the Free Seceders of the south, I have had in my mind only those who, like the Free reviewer in the Magazine, avail themselves of the calumnies of our Baronet's pamphlet. To them I have nothing to retract, for every word I have uttered about them is literally true. But I am certain that many a Free Seceder is as zealous as I can be for the civilisation and Christianisation of the northern counties. Such a person will feel as indignant as I do at Sir G. Sinclair's "lucubrations," which are calculated to impose upon southern brethren. I implore him to forget, for a season, the interests of

the "Sustentation Fund," and to stand forth as an opponent of "the men," and a supporter of all wise and judicious measures for the universal diffusion of knowledge among the Highlanders. I again express my anxious desire that no one should apply what I have written to the Free Secession as a body. I speak of that denomination merely as it exists in the north, and I confine my censure of its members in the south to the reviewer in the Free Church Magazine, and to his coadjutors in circulating this most dishonest and discreditable pamphlet, which he has not been ashamed to commend.*

The other matter to which I wish to allude is connected with the tone and temper by which my letters have been characterised. I am quite prepared to find myself strongly condemned, in certain quarters, for the style of criticism which I have adopted. I request, as an act of simple justice, that such persons will read Sir George Sinclair's pamphlet before pronouncing any opinion on the strictures which it has drawn from my pen. They will feel no surprise at the references to the Baronet's ancestry, and public and private life, when they see that he himself deliberately (page 52) "obtruded" those matters "upon the public eye," and that he did so in the hope of sharpening the dagger which he had pointed against the Church of which he is an office-bearer!! If I had been meeting an honest and straightforward attack upon our Church by a Free Seceder, my observations would have been in a very different strain. "But," Sir, as our Baronet remarks

* In the desire of parting with our Baronet on fairish terms, I beg to say that his pamphlet will be acceptable to a party in England as well as in Scotland. The most extravagant and irrational of the Puseyites will be perfectly enchanted with the seasonable declamation in support of their present agitation, which they will find in pages 43, 44. And I take the liberty of adding, that if Sir George's valued friend, Mr. Dodsworth, and his associates, should be so galled by the yoke of state control as to secede from the English Church, our Baronet, though, as a matter of course, he will "not subscribe to any of its schemes," is likely enough to stand forth as a defender of what will then be, "*The Free and Non-Erastian Church of England!*"

(page 24) "patience, after all, has its limits," and I have no desire to disguise my indignation that the Church of Scotland should have been assailed by one of her own elders in "lucubrations" of which the Free Church Magazine gives the following most candid and accurate *precis*:—"Sir George Sinclair shows (that is, of course, attempts to show) that the Established Church has been fearfully weakened by the Disruption—that, in numbers, worth, and usefulness, she is terribly fallen—that, in the northern counties, she is all but extinct—and that, in nearly all the large towns, the centres of life and influence, she enjoys the support of but a paltry fragment of the population—that the *quoad sacra* policy of the Establishment, viewed by an honest mind as a question of morals, can be regarded in no other light than robbery—that the people give a firm and unfaltering adherence to the Free Church, on grounds that give every promise of its stability and permanence—and, by candidly revealing his own experience, that fellowship with the Scottish Establishment has a withering influence on the piety, comfort, and happiness of its more godly adherents!!!" It occurs to me that I have pretty satisfactorily disposed of "this testimony," and that some of your readers, now that they have formed the acquaintance of Sir George Sinclair, not only in his "early life," but likewise in his (page 4) "declining health, and advancing years," will be inclined to think of what the great master of human nature has expressed in the dialogue which he has put into the mouths of King Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan:—

"GON.—You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little; he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

"REG.—'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

"GON.—The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash, then must we look from his age to receive not

alone the imperfections of long-engraffed condition, but, therewithal, the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them."

I remain, yours, very obediently,

INVESTIGATOR.

23d April, 1850.